THE PRIVATE LETTERS OF SIR ROBERT PEEL

BY GEORGE PEEL

THE ENEMIES OF ENGLAND
THE FRIENDS OF ENGLAND
THE FUTURE OF ENGLAND
THE TARIFF REFORMERS
THE REIGN OF SIR EDWARD CARSON

THE LIFE OF SIR ROBERT PEEL. Based on his Correspondence and Private Documents. Edited by the RT. HON. CHARLES STUART PARKER. With a summary of Peel's Life by his grandson the HON. GEORGE PEEL. With Portraits. In 3 volumes.

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EDITED BY

GEORGE PEEL

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

The letters included in this volume were preserved, after the death of Sir Robert Peel in 1850, by his widow, Lady Peel. On her death in 1859, they passed into the possession of her second son, Sir Frederick Peel. They remained at his house, Hampton Manor, in Warwickshire, until his death in 1906. Subsequently they have been committed to my charge.

In publishing them I have had more than one object in view. First, there is the purely personal consideration that all the members of so widespread a family should be afforded the opportunity, of which I am sure they will be glad, of reading such intimate domestic records. Then, too, the public at large will surely be pleased to be presented with a picture, rare of its kind, of the inward life of a statesman hitherto only placed before them in his official capacity.

Next, I entertain the thought that the student of the society of that age will welcome an account from within as to what went on at Windsor and Strathfieldsaye, at Apthorpe and Belvoir Castle and Sudburn, from the pen of one who was necessarily a chief figure in that departed world.

Finally, the student of politics will not fail, I am sure, to draw, from perusal of these pages, lessons of the most genuine and living importance as to

the true foundations of administrative and legislative wisdom, and will be refreshed and stimulated in his labours by the knowledge of the height which was attained by the statesmanship of Sir Robert Peel.

GEORGE PEEL.

MANCETTER MANOR,
ATHERSTONE.

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THE PRIVATE LETTERS OF SIR ROBERT PEEL

CHAPTER I

THE CHARACTER OF SIR ROBERT PEEL

SIR ROBERT PEEL, born in 1788, was the contemporary of two revolutions—the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain, and the Political Revolution in France. The first of these events produced a vast and sudden increase in the numbers of our population, and the second inaugurated an equally decisive change in favour of democracy. How to govern a new population on a new theory constituted so staggering a problem that for several decades our rulers, in terror, hid their heads in the sand. In the course of time, however, they exchanged that attitude for a more manly posture and consented to set to work amain. Be it said that it was well-nigh too late to remedy the arrears of statesmanship accumulated in a period of inertia, with the consequence that these are very far from being made good to-day.

This agitating and profound conflict between the dictates of dismay and the warnings of wisdom found a seat in the intelligence and in the conscience of Sir Robert Peel. The significance of his career

consists in his gradual inclination towards enlightenment, in the internal revolution of his convictions on the track of the mighty Revolutions which had been.

This transmigration of thought, this metamorphosis of mind, was very painful to him in whom it was wrought. From the age of twenty-one he had been plunged into politics. Associated from the first with those who were apt to mistake panic for principle, he unwittingly imbibed their fears, until he became, by the unkind operation of his own energies, and by the cruel ascendancy of his own intelligence, the champion of such scandals as the Catholic disabilities or that Parliamentary franchise which had been obsolete and absurd even in Tudor days. How singular, then, to reflect upon the weighty and even unique catalogue of reforms assignable to his credit! The act of 1819 for the resumption of cash payments and the establishment of the Gold Standard; the series of statutes humanising and codifying that barbarous penal system which had gone unchecked in cruelty and confusion for eight hundred years: the institution of the Police; the relief of Catholic disabilities; the Bank Act of 1844; the organisation of British credit by the instrumentality of the Income Tax; finally, the supreme gift of the Magna Charta of commercial freedom.

I do not mention these political achievements for their own sake, but in order to note that they involved repeated ordeals, recurring breaches of old associations and friendships, for the man who accomplished them. There was, then, in the life of Sir Robert Peel a standing embarrassment, a frequent stress and strain between the leader and the led,

a division, as it were, between the erect head endowed, as years went on, with more penetrating eyesight, and the scared heads that preferred to bow in the barren blindness of the dust. Unhappily, there was not a little business in this blindness: in this cecity there was calculation too. For the Great War had created a solid contingent of men prepared to profiteer in trade restrictions. Soon or late, war had to be declared upon all such, a war long delayed, indeed, for thirty years after Waterloo, but to the knife, eventually. By 1841 this policy had succeeded in pauperising one person out of every eleven in this country, and "pauperism and crime attained their maxima in 1842."[1] The choice had to be taken, and, when the hour struck in 1845, it was then that Sir Robert Peel stood forth to be, in his own words, "execrated by every monopolist, but sometimes remembered with expressions of goodwill in the abode of those whose lot it is to labour and to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brows."

Here, then, all political considerations apart, was a human being sorely and singularly tried by the antagonism of many opponents and pursued by the shafts of public criticism to an uncommon degree. Since we are here concerned with the inner man, let us inquire how deeply this trial could disturb his happiness, and whether he had a disposition sufficiently armoured to avert such blows. That would depend upon the internal resources available and upon what reserves of character he could summon to his aid.

One main feature of strength in the disposition of Sir Robert was that sustaining satisfaction which a

[1] Walpole, *History of England*, vol. iv, p. 114.

good workman feels in the steady accomplishment of his work. From his youth up, it was his pride to prepare his measures with such elaborate thoroughness as to enable him to carry them through without later amendment. For instance, at the age of thirty-one, in approaching the question of currency reform, he states that he is studying the matter with all the closeness which he would devote to "a proposition in mathematics"; and to this method he refers again in his maturity, when introducing the Bank Act. His regular method consisted in a rigorous examination and an equally exact statement of "the leading principles to which our legislation ought to conform." But this was followed by an equally mathematical study and exposition of the practical possibilities of the hour. Mr. Gladstone has borne tribute to the "extraordinary sagacity" with which this comprehensive method was pursued by Sir Robert and of the practical success which attended it.[1] Nevertheless, on consummate and final occasions, he would not be content with compromise, and struck out from headland to headland across the seas. "Let us leave the tariff as nearly perfect as we can," he writes in 1845 to Goulburn: "Let us put the finishing stroke to the good work." Thus, if sometimes he seemed so prudent, it was not from that caution which is another name for cowardice, and it was in deeds, rather than in words, that he was bold. This confidence in himself, this conviction that he had explored the whole question, this sense of successful workmanship, was one of the pillars sustaining him against all the tempests that could blow. Indeed, with the accomplishment of each

[1] Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, vol. i, p. 254.

great reform, his spirit rose, as if the good of his country were the measure of his private happiness.

Another source of strength to Sir Robert was that, though he necessarily shed many friendships in the course of such extensive voyaging, he formed many more of incomparable worth. These later and better friends formed eventually that famous band of Peelites who in public virtue have never been outshone. These statesmen observed in unison those "most important rules of public policy in which Sir Robert Peel's Government surpassed the Governments which have succeeded it. Among them I would mention purity in patronage, financial strictness, loyal adherence to the principle of public economy, jealous regard to the rights of Parliament, a single eye to the public interest, strong aversion to the extension of territorial responsibilities, and a frank admission of the rights of foreign countries as equal to those of their own."[1] The names of Sir James Graham, of Goulburn, of Cardwell, of Sidney Herbert, of Aberdeen, of Hardinge, above all of Gladstone, readily occur. There was indeed a peculiar beauty and nobility in the relationship of the older statesman with the youthful Gladstone, a connection as of father and son in the service of the Commonwealth. "Peel was most kind, nay fatherly. We held hands instinctively, and I could not but reciprocate with emphasis his 'God bless you.'"[2] Such friendships were ample compensation and consolation for the loss of the Wetherells and the Crokers. In later years, Mr. Gladstone bore his final testimony

[1] Memorandum by Mr. Gladstone in 1880: Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, vol. i, p. 247.

[2] Diary of Mr. Gladstone: Ibid., p. 280.

to this companionship when he wrote to Lady Peel that "As I was inspired by the thought of treading, however unequally, in the ways of my great teacher and master in public affairs, so it was one of my keenest anxieties not to do dishonour to his memory or injustice to the patriotic policy with which his name is for ever associated."[1]

Besides these two inward resources derived from happiness in his work and from his association with so goodly a band of political brothers, there is a third to be mentioned, and this not the least substantial. It is the subject of this book. I mean his domestic life. There was his intense and never-flagging devotion to the wife whom he married in 1820. In their home he could watch with breathless hope and interest the growth of a large family of sons who were to be distinguished, and of daughters who were to be brilliant and beautiful.

This family existence was conceived on a lofty and generous scale. Perhaps Plato might have approved it for two special features well calculated to enhance and elevate it. Sir Robert had the great idea of calling the best art of the time to his assistance, in order to adorn his home at Drayton Manor in Staffordshire with the portraits or the busts of the eminent statesmen and thinkers who were his colleagues or his contemporaries. You lived there in the commanding presence of the hero of Waterloo: yonder Canning spoke with uplifted arm to strike down some erring or ignoble argument: there the stern eyes of Eldon and Stowell reproved the ill-timed zeal of a reforming or a revolutionary generation: farther on you could be cheered by the milder presence of

[1] Parker, *Life of Sir Robert Peel*, vol. iii, p. 560.

Aberdeen: as you gazed upward, you could receive inspiration from the rapt, intense gaze of the youthful Gladstone.

At Drayton too, as well as in his London house of 4, Whitehall Gardens, Sir Robert assembled a magnificent collection of Dutch, Flemish, and British masters, of which seventy-eight have found a home in the National Gallery since 1871, under the name of the Peel Collection.

The other feature of his home life to be noticed was that it was constantly refreshed and dignified by the living presence of the great and wise. Apart from once memorable occasions, such as the visits paid by the Tsar of Russia or by Louis Philippe or by Queen Victoria, let us listen to the account of Guizot, who, as a contemporary French Prime Minister, knew him well. "In the autumn of 1848, Sir Robert engaged me to go and spend several days at Drayton Manor, and I retain a most vivid recollection of that visit. I saw him there in the bosom of his family and surrounded with the people of his estate; Lady Peel, still a beautiful woman, intensely devoted to her husband; a fascinating daughter (Eliza), since married to the son of Lord Camoys; three of Sir Robert's sons, one a naval captain (Sir William Peel, V.C.) already renowned throughout England for his amazing courage, the second already famous in the House of Commons (Sir Frederick Peel, K.C.M.G.), and a third, a youth still at his studies (Arthur, Viscount Peel, Speaker of the House of Commons). On his estate I witnessed a numerous and contented tenantry; great works of agricultural improvement, especially of drainage, to which Sir Robert paid personal attention and which he explained with exact

mastery of the details. A beautiful home life, great and simple, well ordered and on a goodly scale! In the family circle earnestness mingled with affection, a spirit less animated, less expansive, less sweet, perhaps, than our manners require and affect. The great memories of his statesmanship were consecrated by a gallery of portraits, mostly of contemporaries, either colleagues of Sir Robert in the Government or the eminent men with whom he had had relations. Outside the house, a distinction drawn between the owner and the people, but bridged by a closeness of intercourse, full of equity and goodwill on the one side, and without envy and submissiveness on the other. I witnessed there one of the happiest examples of the legitimate ascendancy of personality and position, without the memories or the claims of aristocracy, but beautified and consecrated by mutual and general sentiment for the common rights of men. Noble country! so full of true spirits and of generous hearts." [1]

There was yet a fourth pillar which sustained the structure of this character against the assaults of life. I refer to religion, a religion somewhat hidden in the shadow and too withdrawn even for these letters to shed a light upon it. Mr. Gladstone considered that Sir Robert Peel, while possessing on the one hand "a noble moral sense," and "being a religious man," was on the other hand "non-clerical and largely undogmatic." [2] And this was true. Whereas Mr. Gladstone could say of himself "the inner life has been with me extraordinarily complex," [3] and whereas

[1] Guizot, *Sir Robert Peel*, p. 316.

[2] Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, vol. i, pp. 177, 373.

[3] Ibid., vol. i, p. 373.

it could be said of him that it is difficult to realise "the vigour of soul that maintained that inner life in Mr. Gladstone in all its absorbing exaltation, day after day, year after year, decade after decade"—it was otherwise with the elder statesman. Both lived, indeed, under the sway and supremacy of religion. Mr. Gladstone felt the subtlety of its inspiration; Sir Robert Peel the simplicity of its instruction.

CHAPTER II

THE SUCCESSES OF YOUTH

This volume offers to the public the private family correspondence of Sir Robert Peel, as distinguished from his official papers.

His official papers, some 100,000 in number, were recently presented to the British Museum, where they invite the visitation and research of scholars and historians. It is true that much work has already been done upon these documents, and that much invaluable material has already been extracted from them. Thus Sir Robert himself, after his final fall from power in 1846, drew up three memoirs, selected from this official correspondence and respectively entitled *The Roman Catholic Question*, 1828–9, *The New Government*, 1834–5, and *The Repeal of the Corn Laws*, 1845–6. He did not, indeed, proceed to publication, but after his death in 1850 these memoirs were issued by his trustees in 1856–7. Finally in 1899 the whole of the official papers were summarised and digested into the authoritative *Life of Sir Robert Peel*, issued by Mr. John Murray in three volumes and edited by C. S. Parker, at whose disposal the trustees had placed the whole of the records in question.

The volumes of the official life had enough to do to portray Sir Robert Peel as a public man. Indeed, as the editor mentioned in his preface, "Sir Robert



ROBERT PEEL, THE PRIME MINISTER
From a Miniature by Sir William Ross, R.A

Peel is here portrayed, not in private life—of all this there are glimpses, but the central subject is his conduct as a public man."[1] Nothing could mark more clearly the difference between that work and this present one.

The Peel family had migrated from Yorkshire to Lancashire in the latter days of Queen Bess, and can trace its descent in direct lineage from that date. But the real originator of its fortunes was Robert Peel of Blackburn. About the middle of the eighteenth century, this Robert, who possessed, we are told, "a mechanical genius," decided to exchange his agricultural for industrial interests, and thus quickly became one of the fathers and founders of our Industrial Revolution. He was, in fact, the chief of that remarkable band of men who founded the cotton industry of Lancashire, an organisation destined to become, in the course of a century or more, the greatest, the most complex, and the most efficient instrument of scientific production that the world has ever seen.

What is even more agreeable and interesting for his descendants, he founded the fortunes of the Peel family.

The constructive ability of this admirable pioneer descended chiefly to his third son, also named Robert, who was born near Bury in 1750. He too was an "originator and reformer," highly sagacious, highly energetic, and zealous to utilise those wonderful discoveries then rising every day on the horizon of our industrial renaissance. His father had removed part of his works to Burton-on-Trent, when the operatives of Lancashire, unable adequately to appreciate

[1] Parker, *Sir Robert Peel*, vol. ii, Preface, p. 11.

the bearing of his mechanical inventions, had broken out in revolt against them. This connection led this second Robert in due course to settle at Drayton Bassett in Staffordshire, where he built Drayton Manor. He became in due course member of Parliament for the adjacent town of Tamworth in 1790, and his keen support of the policy of Pitt brought him a baronetcy in 1800. He continued in Parliament until 1830. He had married in 1783 the apparently charming Ellen Yates, daughter of another leading Lancashire light, and partner in the family firm. Their eldest son, the future Prime Minister, was born on February 5, 1788, at Chamber Hall near Bury. The tradition, or the truth, is that on the birth of this infant the father fell on his knees and dedicated him to the service of his country.

At the age of ten the boy removed with the rest of the family to Drayton, where, under the worthy vicar, he was adjudged to be "a good boy of gentle manners, quick in feeling and very sensitive." In January 1801 he went on to Harrow, where he was the contemporary and the friend of the famous Byron. According to the latter "there were always great hopes of Peel amongst us all, masters and scholars." In 1804 the pair of friends declaimed together, Byron as Latinus (sitting to conceal his lameness) and Peel as Turnus. "I was always in scrapes, and he never," says Byron with a touch of legitimate pride. Another schoolfellow remembered him as "the light-haired, blue-eyed, fair-complexioned, smiling, good-natured boy, indolent somewhat as to physical exertion, but overflowing with mental energy." At Christmas 1804 he left Harrow and spent the ensuing season at his father's house in

Upper Grosvenor Street, being very regular in his attendance at the House of Commons, where Pitt and Fox still held sway.

In October 1805 he went up to Christ Church, Oxford. Oxford had recently awakened from that lethargy which had been the theme of the sarcasm of Gibbon, and under the new system of examination Peel obtained in 1808 a double first-class in mathematics as well as in classics, his *viva voce* examination constituting the first of his public triumphs. After he had taken his degree his father bought him the seat of Cashel in Tipperary, as one might buy a uniform or a hunter, and accordingly, in April 1809, at the age of twenty-one, he took his seat in the House of Commons. A Ministry headed by the Duke of Portland was in power, and the Whigs, now completely wrecked by the recent death of Fox, were in opposition. Fresh from a Tory home and a Tory University, Peel naturally gave his support to the Government. In 1810 he seconded the address in a speech of about forty minutes which the Speaker adjudged to have been "the best first speech since that of Mr. Pitt," a compliment which probably every parent received in those days.

Something highly agreeable now occurred. He was offered and accepted the post of Under Secretary for War and the Colonies. Evidently, with the example of Pitt before their eyes, the authorities of those days did not object to a young man as such. For remember that at about this time that other youthful Harrovian, the future Lord Palmerston, was offered the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer at the callow age of twenty-four, but graciously condescended to select another Cabinet post of superior attraction.

The occasion of Peel's entry into office was celebrated, it seems, by the thrifty gift of two brace of "moor game" from his maternal grandfather, Mr. Yates. The Minister, aged twenty-two, duly installed at Downing Street, acknowledges the receipt of the birds in the high-flown Georgian style. Note how a "post" is an "official situation."

DOWNING STREET,
August 18, 1810.

MY DEAR GRANDFATHER,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your kind letter and of two brace of uncommonly fine moor game. The sight of them made me regret that I cannot accompany the Colonel in his visit to Church parish moor. Tell him, however, that I shall be in Staffordshire early in September and of course expect to find him there on my arrival, and that I hope he will not be reduced to pocket a brace of dead partridges for fear of returning without a bird.

I am too well assured of your affection for me and of the interest you take in my welfare to doubt that you were gratified with the opportunity that was given me of accepting an official situation, and believe me it is with no cold and affected feeling that I tell you that your simple assurance that anything I have done gives you pleasure and satisfaction is the dearest and proudest reward I can receive.

With the kindest regards to Mrs. Yates, I am, my dear Grandfather,

Your most affectionate grandson,
R. PEEL.

Lord Liverpool was chief of Peel in his office, and himself presently became Prime Minister upon the murder of Perceval in May 1812. Having assured himself that his junior had acquired "all the neces-

sary habits of official business," and not to be behindhand in the quest of youth, the new Premier induced Peel to accept the very important post of Chief Secretary for Ireland. In those halcyon days these ex-undergraduates seemed able to enter office as easily nowadays as they might board a tram.

Peel held the Irish office for six years up to 1818, and I do not propose to weary the reader with any account of his political doings in the Green Isle. His duties were threefold. First, he had to dispense the Hibernian patronage, the official task of official tasks. An astonished world put up its eyeglass when it observed that offices were no longer sold and Civil servants no longer dismissed for political actions. Secondly, he had to maintain order in Ireland, where we had broken our promises to the Catholics, and to repress the nearly irrepressible O'Connell. Disorder rose to such a height that in 1814 he had to carry two Acts, one reviving the terrible Insurrection Act of 1807, and the other establishing the Peace Preservation Police, immortal under the name of "Peelers." Thirdly, he undertook to be "spokesman to the intolerant faction" by regularly opposing concessions to the Catholics. A difficult task, seeing that in this dead winter of Protestant ascendancy the House of Commons resolved, on three occasions in 1813, that it was meet and right to allow these much-persecuted Christians to have normal rights. In 1817 the University of Oxford, espying at length a statesman after her own reactionary heart, made him her member. But he was weary of the whole disgusting task, and in August 1818 laid down his office and quitted Ireland.

During this period occurred his rather notorious

duel or attempt at a duel with "the Liberator" O'Connell. Into the heroics of that episode I confess to be unable to enter with any biographical or family enthusiasm. It was a grotesque and unseemly war which opened at that date when the Napoleonic wars had been ended by Waterloo, and it lasted with odd fits and starts as long as the ten-years war in Troy. For in 1825 O'Connell finally apologised for his "scurrility."

It was from the battlements of Windsor Castle that the opening shot of this battle was fired, incredible to relate! At any rate, here is the letter of the offended Chief Secretary:

WINDSOR CASTLE,
September 4, 1815, 6 o'clock.

SIR,

Having seen in a newspaper of this evening a letter bearing your signature, connected with a communication which I have recently made to you, imputing to me "a paltry trick" and concluding with the expression of your regret that I have ultimately preferred "a paper war," I have to request that you will appoint a friend who will make with Colonel Brown, the bearer of this letter, such arrangements as the case requires.

I am, sir,
etc., etc.,
ROBERT PEEL.

To Daniel O'Connell, Esq.

Bent on this affair of honour, Peel speeds away to Ostend, only to find that O'Connell has been carefully arrested on the other side. However, amends are made by the seconds, who fight it out instead on the sandy beach near Calais. O'Connell's second, having

been duly missed by Peel's second, fires his pistol into the air "from regard for the solicitude of his adversary's mother." Peel, apparently less tender towards maternal feelings, then runs over to Calais himself in order to fight O'Connell's second. But the arbiter of such points of honour, in the person of Colonel Brown, now intervenes to forbid the combat on the ground that it is undesirable that the Chief Secretary should shoot at another man's second who has the impropriety not to guarantee to shoot back.

It is certain that in those days political and electioneering passions rose to a height of which we have little conception. Allow me to quote, however, a letter on the subject of the local Tamworth politics written to Robert Peel by his father, the first Sir Robert. Observe the prudence of the older man. With an eye to future eventualities he proposes methods whereby the blazing passions of the town shall be "sobered by inactivity." But in these days a squire does not speak of his local town, when writing to his son, as a place where "our offspring may be expected to reside for a century to come."

LONDON,
June 10, 1818.

MY DEAR ROBERT,

From a friendly communication received this morning I greatly fear that some of our friends have expressed themselves with more warmth than prudence. Our object is by a canvass to increase the number of our friends, and it is the more material for our family when we ourselves and our offspring may be expected to reside for a century to come. We may, by mismanagement, lose a seat in Parliament. But by heat and intemperance we may experience a much greater misfortune and lose the

friendship and goodwill of our neighbourhood. I trust your presence at Tamworth will make friends, but at least you will avoid making enemies. Amongst our friends you will endeavour to suppress all angry passions and to keep on good terms with those who, on the present occasion, will not vote with us. We may want their services on some future occasion. I have enclosed you a copy of a letter I have written to Lord John Townshend, who behaved, on his visit yesterday to me, in the most friendly manner. He said he was sensible that his family owed their seat in Parliament to my kindness for the Borough of Tamworth in many successive Parliaments, and, having disposed of the whole of their estate in that neighbourhood, he was very much displeased with his nephew for disturbing the town and wished me and my son, William, every success.

I think you will find it to our interest to have the town sobered by inactivity and the time is approaching when a contrary conduct cannot safely be pursued.

The Prince Regent is going to the House of Lords to-day to prorogue Parliament and it is expected we shall be dissolved to-morrow.

Yours affectionately,
ROBERT PEEL.

The Right Hon. Robert Peel.

Perhaps the ordinary electioneering passions of those times are better represented by the straightforward effusion of William Peel, the brother of the future Prime Minister, who with his father represented Tamworth at that date. It runs as follows:

TO THE WORTHY ELECTORS
OF TAMWORTH

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I have this instant read Mr. Floyer's address to you dated Worthing, October 20. I shall at present

content myself with most solemnly assuring you that it contains the GROSSEST FALSEHOODS. Mr. Floyer having already shown himself a VILE COWARD, has now proved himself to be an INFAMOUS LIAR. I shall not lose a moment in inflicting upon this INFERNAL SCOUNDREL the chastisement he so richly merits.

If on my return to Tamworth any Gentleman is anxious to be informed of the conversation which REALLY took place between Mr. Floyer and myself on the 17th of June, I shall most gladly communicate it to him from notes which I took on our parting.

I have the honour to remain,
Your very humble Servant,
WILLIAM PEEL.

TAMWORTH,
November 6, 1818.

Although Peel was now out of office, in spite of several repeated offers of Cabinet posts, there was one great achievement of this period of inactivity. This was his reorganisation of the currency and the establishment of the Gold Standard on a proper basis. It was a great tribute to Peel that the Committee of the House of Commons appointed to consider the question, and including such statesmen as Castlereagh, Canning, and Huskisson, made him their Chairman. He carried through "Peel's Act" of 1819, thus accomplishing what Canning, in view of the youth of its author, described as the greatest wonder which he had witnessed in the political world. *Moneta in justum valorem redacta*, "the restoration of the currency to its proper value," is the claim made on

her tomb on behalf of Queen Elizabeth. The same meed of praise was now applicable to Peel. I am certain that the reader is longing to embark upon a discussion of the Currency question, but I will observe the self-denying ordinance of silence.



JULIA FLOYD, WIFE OF THE PRIME MINISTER.

CHAPTER III

MARRIAGE AND SOCIETY

An event much more important than "the par of exchange" or than "the measure of value" now occurred in the life of the rising statesman. This was the exchange of vows with an immeasurably valued young lady, Julia Floyd. She was the youngest daughter of General Sir John Floyd.

This John Floyd came of a fighting stock of cavalry officers. Their earliest cavalry commission is dated 1680, in the time of Charles II. The father of Floyd had fought in the Battle of Minden during the Seven Years War, while serving with the 1st Dragoon Guards, and had died soon after of wounds received. Floyd himself was then a child, but was at once taken in charge by a friend and fellow-officer of his father, the Lord Pembroke of the day, who, in recognition of his father's gallantry, procured him a commission in Elliott's Horse, the regiment which was later known as the 15th Hussars.

This famous "troop of tailors" covered itself with glory at the Battle of Emsdorf in July 1760, and on this occasion this very junior officer of twelve highly distinguished himself. He had his horse shot under him, but took a sabre from a French dragoon which is still preserved in the family, and has "Regiment Turpin" and "Vivat Hussar" enigmatically inscribed upon it.

After this exploit Lord Pembroke obtained for him two years' absence for the purposes of education at Utrecht. Thence he returned to stay at Wilton with his guardian, in whose company he later made the grand tour of Europe. He then reverted to regimental duty. Let me give an interesting letter which Floyd writes to his patroness, Lady Pembroke, on the occasion of a visit which he paid during this period to the manœuvres of Frederick the Great of Prussia.

Letters from Sir John Floyd to Lady Pembroke

BRESLAU,
August 27, 1777.

MADAM,

Having obtained the King of Prussia's leave to be present at his Reviews in Silesia, we arrived there the 19th, the day before the King came. We were present at an exercise of the Troops the 20th, and at the Reviews the King made of different parts of the army. The 23rd the King saw all the infantry, 15 battalions, perform their lesson, and after that 15 squadrons of Cuirassiers and 10 squadrons of Hussars performed theirs before His Majesty. I will only say of these troops that I never beheld soldiers till I saw the Prussians. They have the same superiority by land over anything I have yet seen, that I conceive our sailors have over all others on their Element.

Nobody ever thinks of writing politicks from this country, or entering into minutiæ, nor am I capable if so inclined, but I can say in general that this is the most extraordinary country, and its Ruler far the most extraordinary man on the face of the earth. It is wonderful what exercise and what business he goes through. The 24th the King divided his army into two bodies to act as enemies; the attacking

body he led himself; the defending was under the command of Gen. Anhalt, who was posted on the heights near Neyss, in order to defend the pass into Upper Silesia. The King turned the enemy's right flank, and I am told most of his battles in the late war were gained by a movement of the same nature. The 25th, the King let Gen. Anhalt take post on the heights above Neyss, in order to prevent His Majesty's corps from filing out of Neyss towards the Bohemian mountains, which however he did under the cannon of the fortress, and drove the enemy from a village and a wood where they took post.

The variety of the ground in both these days' manœuvres presented most of the situations in which Cavalry, Infantry, and Cannon act in war, and was therefore infinitely interesting to the military, and very entertaining to spectators of all kinds. The King of Prussia, at the head of his army, was a sight which exceeded all my hopes, and has answered more than I can express. Lord Herbert was more entertained than with any other thing I have seen. We were up at 3, 4, or 5 every morning. All the Generals and all the Prussians were exceeding obliging and civil, tho' by the suddenness of our expedition we were unprepared with recommendations. 2 Battalions of Infantry, and 15 Squadrons of Cuirassiers were incamped, so that we saw most of the events of a campaign. As to the 10 Squadrons of Hussars, they are a corps of people who never have any tents, and lay under trees, hedges, and under miserable sheds of two or three boards in the orchards and gardens of a neighbouring village.

The Prince of Prussia is a very fine fellow, but meddles with nothing. After this day's manœuvre the King went to Brieg, to visit the fortress, and lay at Ohlau, in a poor cottage in the suburbs, without a sentinel. He is vastly beloved by the peasants. He relieves their wants, and when they have suffered

by any publick calamity remits them even as far as a year's taxes.

The 24th in the morning the King reviewed Panowitz' regiment of Cuirassiers of 5 squadrons, and a regiment of Hussars of 10 squadrons. Our friends lent us excellent horses, and after it was over Winterfeld and the Comtesse Mahlzahn gave us a very good dinner. These regiments came to the camp near Breslau. In the afternoon we arrived in that large town, second in size only to Berlin, in all the Prussian Dominions. The town has been taken, retaken, burnt, bombarded, and plundered by Prussians, Russians, and Austrians about five millions of times. Every post in this country we cross some field of battle famous for the destruction of some one of these armies. An old friend of mine, the Comte de Schlabberendorf, of a very hard name, who I met at Neyss, gave us some letters here that will be very useful as long as we stay. Lord Herbert is just bestockinged and shoed for a ball at the Commander-in-Chief's, to which he alone is invited, by some mistake, I am sure, of the confounded running footman's of his Excellency, for I flattered myself I was well with him and had some civilities from him and his aide-de-camp. To-morrow we sup at the Minister of State's.

This morning the King reviewed 10 battalions of infantry. To-morrow he sees some cavalry and hussars, and more the next day, the 30th the army encamps about 6 miles off, and we shall get some straw in a neighbouring cottage. The manœuvres finish the 2nd of September, and we shall make some forced marches to see Dresden, and arrive at Prague time enough for the Austrian camps there, and at Brunn in Moravia, on our way to Vienna. The camp at Prague begins about the 10th, the Emperor will be there.

I imagined your ladyship and Lord Pembroke wished that Lord Herbert should take advantage of

any opportunity that offered of seeing these armies, (which so far surpass all others that ever yet appeared in any age) and that may not present itself again during Lord Herbert's present plan of operations. I therefore hope the Silesian journey and the visit to the Austrian camps will meet with your approbations though it necessarily defers our arrival at Vienna so much beyond the time prepared.

As I write no detail of what concerns the troops to Lord Pembroke or anybody, a letter to him would be only a copy of this. I therefore beg your ladyship will be so good as to convey this to him. The officers of Panowitz' regiment of Cuirassiers showed me a translation of Lord Pembroke's book on horsemanship in German; they hold it in the highest esteem. The regiment is the most famous in the service and lately belongs to General Seidlitz, reckoned the best cavalry officer of his time, and particularly beloved by the King. I have good reasons to believe his Prussian Majesty is better acquainted with every corner of his dominions, than any private gentleman is with his estate of £500 a year. Everything passes through his own hands, and his wonderful order makes it all easy. The most minute things, as well as the great ones, are objects of his attention. Anybody may write to him, and be certain of his answer, signed by himself, next day.

I am, with great truth, your ladyship's most obliged and obedient humble servant,

J. Floyd.

At last the opportunity of his life came. In 1782 he went out to India, as Colonel of a newly raised regiment, the 19th Light Dragoons, and here he stayed until 1800, serving through all those famous old campaigns against Tippoo Sultan. He rose to be a full general in 1812, and was created a Baronet

with the grant of a special crest, a lion rampant bearing the standard of Tippoo Sultan in his paws.

But I have omitted the fact that really concerns us here, his marriage. He writes to Lady Pembroke from India announcing this event:

DARKE'S GARDEN, NEAR FORT ST. GEORGE,
January 29, 1791.

MADAM,

I had the honour of writing to you from my camp, not long ago,, and of relating my *violent proceedings* against the enemy.

This day be pleased, Madam, to accept my short, but interesting narrative of proceedings extremely different.

Your ladyship's approbation of my conduct, in general, is of the greatest importance to me and will for ever most essentially add to my happiness.

This morning I married Miss Darke, the daughter of Mr. Darke, a Free Merchant of Madras, in the presence of her father and mother. Her blue eyes, gentle manners, and other very interesting circumstances had made terrible ravages in my heart a great while. The army came near Madras to receive Earl Cornwallis, stores, etc., and she was pleased to reward me for the labours of the Campaign.

On the third of next month, sad to relate, I take my station again at the head of the Van, and the army marches for Seringapatam. I return to the field with inexhaustible ardour, fair and reasonable confidence, and a much happier man than I have ever yet been. I thank God that I have lived to have all the affections called forth, and to experience their gratification to the pitch.

Your ladyship will greatly oblige me by communicating the circumstances of my marriage to my most dear and most respected friends, Lord Pembroke and Lord Herbert, who I know will pardon me for occupying myself at this time in writing letters.

Mrs. Floyd has long been acquainted with your most eminent virtues, and knows that I shall ever esteem myself under the highest obligations to your ladyship for the friendship with which you have so long honoured me, and is very desirous of presenting her most humble respects to you.

I have the honour to remain, etc.,

JOHN FLOYD.

The third child of this marriage, Julia, was born in 1795 amid the stormy hours of the Indian campaign.

Be it noted that in due course the first Lady Floyd died, and in 1806 the General married a certain widow, named Lady Denny, of "Tralee Castle in the County of Kerry." The official announcement of the marriage stated that "the General made her a settlement of £1,500 per annum and also one of £500 per annum to each of her accomplished sisters." Such an indiscriminate endowment of Irish sisters-in-law was indeed worthy of the age of Rajahs and Nabobs.

From the obscurity and silence of India comes a letter addressed to Julia by her grandfather at Trichinopoly:

TRICHINOPOLY,
October 11, 1807.

DEAR JULIA, MY DEAR GRANDDAUGHTER,

Your pretty and affectionate letter, and your and your dear sister and brother's lovely and charming pictures, delight, please, and comfort me greatly, and your dear Papa's account of you is very pleasing and gratifying to me indeed. I long to see you all, and hope it will not be long before I have that happiness.

I am, my dear, dear Julia,
Your affectionate Grandfather,
CHARLES DARKE.

The conquest of the heart of this young lady was completed in March 1820. There is a family tradition that, at one moment in the courtship, Robert was seized with some qualms at the contrast between his very serious, and her more mundane, preoccupations. Or perhaps it was that he wished to draw her forward into some definite avowal by a feigned retreat. At any rate, he expressed a doubt as to whether she was not too fond of "the world." "You are my world" was the comprehensive and captivating answer. Certes, that must have settled it.

According to the archaic proprieties of those days, Robert now retires to the shades of Bognor immediaately after the engagement, to stay with his sister Mary[1]; while Julia repairs to Berkeley Square to take post with the Dowager Countess of Clermont. I give a few letters, records of a style which has assuredly passed away. For no one, whether in politics or elsewhere, presumably now writes about "the ardour and constancy of my attachment" or issues promises to "consult my own inclination and obey your injunctions."

STANHOPE STREET,
Tuesday, *March* 14, 1820.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

I must write you one line to bid you adieu, as I cannot see you this morning, and to implore you not to forget your promise of writing, should anything occur.

Now that the carriage is at the door, I heartily

[1] Mary Peel married Rt. Hon. George Dawson of Castle Dawson, County of Derry, January 1816.

repent of the visit to Bognor. How I wish you were going there!

Believe me, my dearest Julia,
With unceasing love,
Ever ever yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

March 15, 1820.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

As I write to you before I have done anything or seen anything, you must not be disappointed. I might supply the want of other materials by impassioned declarations of my love and admiration of you, but such declarations are so easily made and so often insincere, and I am so satisfied that they are unnecessary to convince you of the ardour and the constancy of my attachment to you, that I purposely avoid them. You told me to write to you with the same freedom and unreserve as if I were speaking to you, and I have a double reason for doing so as I thus consult my own inclinations and obey your injunctions.

We arrived here last night before six, having very narrowly escaped the misfortune of being detained at Petworth, where all was bustle and confusion on account of the Sussex election, and nothing but the kindness of the Committee of one of the candidates enabled us to proceed.

We are about a quarter of a mile from the sea, with an imperfect view of it. It is in vain for me to wish that you were here, but I cannot see the tide receding and a fine hard sand left by it without thinking of the happiness I should have in riding or walking with you upon it. God grant you may have occasion to fulfil your promise of writing to me! If you have, do not forget it.

Adieu, my dearest Julia,
Ever most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

The following is addressed to Lady Floyd, the step-mother of his fiancée:

BOGNOR,
March 19, 1820.

DEAR LADY FLOYD,

I felt perfectly confident that my father would rejoice most sincerely at the intelligence that my last letter conveyed to him. I am quite sure that if I had been so exceedingly dutiful as to allow him to select a wife for me, and if by some means or other (I am afraid that nothing but enchantment would do) he could have commanded the lady's affections as well as mine—his choice would have fallen upon Julia.

If I was in any other situation than the happy one in which I am, I would condole with you on your approaching loss, and believe me, if it had been any other Treasure in the world, which after a long possession you were about to resign to me, I would attempt to make you amends by the relinquishment of a liberal portion of it. However, though I cannot promise to relinquish anything in this instance, I will never rob you of that to which you have every claim, the affectionate gratitude of Julia for the care you have taken of her, and for the manner in which you have supplied that which under the circumstances must have proved the severest loss to her.

To her gratitude I add my own, a very sincere tribute, though an unavailing compensation for what I am about to deprive you of. If you have been silent in Julia's praise, I was either too confident of your attachment to her to remark it, or I was too willing to impute your silence to what would have been a sufficient and satisfactory cause, the firm conviction in your mind that I had that sense of her merit that would make all panegyric superfluous and tame.

Believe me, dear Lady Floyd,
Very sincerely yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

The course of true love now began to run less smooth between Berkeley Square and Bognor. The lady, it seems, declined to write letters, or at any rate was very chary of putting her pen to paper. She took the part, at any rate, of "withholding longer communications." All the amusement that the exile can derive from the beatitudes of Bognor is to "toil over a shingle beach," and to witness the rather insipid "humours of a contested election" in Sussex.

It is of interest, by the way, to note the very warm eulogy in this letter of the ideal Goulburn. He was the political contemporary of Peel, and had become Under Secretary at the Home Office at what was then the advanced age of 24. The year after this letter was written he too became Chief Secretary for Ireland, rising to be Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1828. Sir Robert made him Home Secretary in his first Administration of 1834, and Chancellor of the Exchequer in his second Administration of 1841. A Peelite of the Peelites, he was one of the executors of Sir Robert, in 1850, and when a public funeral was proposed for the deceased statesman by Lord John Russell, Goulburn rose from his seat in the House of Commons to decline the honour on behalf of the family. He spoke on that occasion as one who had had "the inestimable advantage of being connected with the late Sir Robert Peel in the most intimate bonds of friendship for above forty years." This was the individual who, so Robert explains, "of all the men with whom I was ever acquainted approaches the nearest to perfection."

BOGNOR,
March 19, 1820.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

I acknowledge with thankfulness even the few lines you prevail on yourself to write to me. though it is rather tantalising to receive so much and no more. Believe me, however, I do full justice to your motives in withholding from me longer communications, and I derive from their brevity the consolation of reflecting that you are perfectly well, and that nothing has occurred since I left Town to give you the least annoyance. You know I rely upon your promise to overcome in either of two events every scruple as to writing to me.

I must enclose a letter I have received from one whose attachment I value as much as that of any *man* on earth, and for whom I have the sincerest regard and respect. It is from Mr. Goulburn, and you will not be surprised that I should wish you to accede to the request which its concluding paragraph contains, when I assure you that of all the men with whom I was ever acquainted, he approaches the nearest to perfection. His perfect happiness at home and love of retirement have rather separated me from him of late, but no separation can abate my esteem and regard for him. Perhaps I have another reason for sending you his letter, which you will guess, though I am half ashamed of acknowledging it. You will think I am reserving all the novelties of Bognor for my concluding letters to you. I must do it the justice of admitting that it exactly suits us, for I am sure in the opinion of a regular frequenter of watering places it must be the paragon of dullness. There is nothing whatever to gratify the taste of those who delight in the festivities of Brighton or Margate. No theatre, no balls, no society, nay, not even a walk. Mary and I toiled over a shingle beach yesterday which must have been precisely in the same state at the

creation of the world. If you will come here, however, I will promise to explore and discover walks in abundance. I have not ridden since I came, and I let Alexander Cockburn go alone to see the foxhounds at Goodwood yesterday. We drove in the Tilbury to Chichester the day before, and saw the humours of a contested election for the county.

Ever, my dearest Julia,
Most affectionately yours,
R. P.

BOGNOR,
March 22, 1820.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

What am I to write to you about to-day? If I allude to the lines which the post has brought me this morning, I must notice the threat which they contain that you will write to me no more. Well, to-morrow week at the latest I shall have the happiness of seeing you, and that will make amends to me for your silence. But do not carry your threat into execution, do not admit by ceasing to write to me that you repent you have written to me. I should be perfectly happy if you were here, and should like this place the more for the absence of everything which other persons would think agreeable.

Our days pass in the same unvarying sameness. I can hardly tell you what we do. I for my part do nothing but write to you and look at the sea, and sometimes pretend to read a book, and when I think I have been particularly attentive, awake from a sort of reverie, and ask myself in vain what it is I have been reading about.

I hope you take delight in the wildness and magnificence of Nature, as well as in the calmer beauties of cultivated scenery. You see I put quite out of the question long ranges of brick walls, and tracts of stone pavement, which many young ladies

would think infinitely preferable to either one or the other.

I do not want you quite to agree with me in having a particular admiration for the sterility and solitude of a rocky, uninhabited wilderness; I will be content if you will think a very high mountain, with a rude, craggy outline, a splendid and awful sight, but I am sure you have much too pure a taste not to think so.

Good-bye, my dearest Julia,

Ever most affectionately yours,

R. P.

March 23, 1820.

MY DEAREST,

Not one line from my dearest Julia, not even the direction of a letter. The arrival of the post is the only moment of any interest, and when it brings nothing from you, I open what it does bring with great indifference. I intend at this present moment to write you a very short letter to-day, and am vain enough to consider that a punishment. But I dare say I shall have forgiven you before I get to the bottom of this page, and perhaps I shall punish you by a long letter full of nothing.

You will think we are very idle when I tell you that yesterday we made our first excursion. I drove Mary in the Tilbury to Goodwood, and A. Cockburn rode my horse there. To me it was rather a melancholy visit, for the last time I was at Goodwood the poor Duke, for whom I had a sincere regard, was alive, and the walks that I had traversed with him, and the wood that we had shot in together, brought him and his mild firmness and uniform good-nature to my recollection more strongly than many other circumstances have done, that one would suppose likely to make a more forcible impression. I never knew a man of whom it could be said with so much justice, that he was always anxious to find an excuse

for the misconduct of his friends, and to put the most charitable construction on the acts of every human being. Can it be true that the Duchess of Richmond is to be married to Mr. Walter Stirling? Lady Jane and Lady E. Monck have sent the report here, but I never can believe that the Duke of Richmond's widow would become the wife of a man in every respect the reverse of her husband.

Lady Jane speaks favourably of your picture, she says it will be very like. I fear Mr. Saunders makes very unreasonable demands on your time. It is beginning to blow an equinoctial gale, and, though I do not wish that there should be a storm for my amusement—if there is one—I shall not be sorry to witness so magnificent a scene.

Ever most affectionately yours,
My dearest Julia,
R. P.

In the following letter of this brief series there is an allusion to "the fair Rosamund." This was Rosamund Croker, *née* Pennell, wife of John Wilson Croker. Croker himself was a Galway man, the famous essayist of the Tory *Quarterly Review*, which had been established in 1809, the year of Peel's entry into Parliament, and to which Croker regularly contributed during the long span of years up to 1854. He wrote those very "tartarly" articles in the *Quarterly* supposed to be so deadly to young poets, and his special shafts were directed against such rising geniuses of the day as Leigh Hunt or Shelley or Keats. As regards his political activities, he lives in the pages of *Coningsby*, immortally libelled in the character of "Rigby."

Needless to say that, in that age when every youth was almost conscripted into high office, Croker,

who had entered Parliament at the age of twenty-six, was quickly offered a great position, that of Secretary to the Admiralty, in 1809. "It was a higher post than Croker aspired to," his biographer tells us. Nevertheless, it seems that he was induced to accept a fine official residence and a salary of £3,500 a year, when the Prime Minister would take no refusal.

It is evident that Croker, whether in politics or in literature, was in precise harmony with the ruling powers of those days. Besides this, he exercised a great attraction for many in the first flight of politics, among them Canning, Wellington, and Peel. His earliest extant correspondence with the latter is dated 1812, and even then had been of some years' standing. There must have been a warmth of disposition, a native magnetism, somewhere in Croker; for Peel, none too lavish of effusiveness, writes "yours affectionately" from the start. Long years after, a final separation arose over the Corn Laws, in connection with some disagreeable articles published in *The Quarterly Review*. Accordingly when, in 1847, the undaunted Croker writes and signs himself, "I am, my dear Peel, very sincerely and affectionately yours, *up to the altar*, J. W. Croker"—in response to this greeting Sir Robert concludes a very stiff reply as follows: "I trust there is nothing inconsistent with perfect civility in the expression of an earnest wish that the same principle which suggested to you the propriety of closing a written correspondence of thirty-seven years may be extended to every other species of intercourse. I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant, Robert Peel." Exit Croker.

March 27, 1820.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

I will never come to Bognor again unless you promise to accompany me. Yesterday the weather was so bad that it was impossible to go out, and to-day there is no great improvement, but we are resolved to drive to Arundel and see the castle, if it be only to pass away so much time. Alex. Cockburn has consented to stay here till Thursday. He blames me for having made him buy a horse and then for refusing ever to ride with him. Did you know that Sir James Cockburn was Aide-de-Camp to your father in India? I have a great many questions to ask you, and some letters to show you, but as only four or five days have to elapse before I have the happiness of seeing you, I will reserve both.

One of the letters is a letter of congratulation from Mr. Croker, who tells me that fair Rosamund, (for perhaps you do not know that that is Mrs. Croker's romantic name,) is a professed admirer of yours. I am confident she feels great alarm for your future happiness, for I am not a favourite, and she complains very much of the expense to which I put her, and declares she has torn several gowns in the hurry of making her escape from me, when she has heard my voice, etc. However, if she really likes you as much as you deserve, (admires, I ought to say, for she cannot know you much,) she will have a claim upon my regard which I shall be most ready to acknowledge, and I shall not despair of conciliating more of her goodwill than I at present possess.

Ever, etc.,

ROBERT PEEL.

BOGNOR,
March 28, 1820.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

I wish I could amuse or interest you by a description of Arundel Castle. We were all greatly

disappointed with it, and saw nothing to recompense us for a long drive on a wet day. A very large proportion of the castle is modern, built by the late Duke, who was his own architect. Everything is in bad taste. There are three most expensive paintings on glass, on which the finest colours and the greatest skill have been lavished in representing full-length portraits of the late Duke. In one, he appears as a Baron at the signature of Magna Charta, accompanied by Alderman Combe as a cardinal and Captain Morris, a writer of songs, and one of his drinking companions in some character or other equally appropriate. After seeing the castle we clambered to the top of an old tower, where we were introduced to five horned owls, which are considered by an old man who shows them to be the wonders of the creation.

The whole scene was a melancholy one. The castle is deserted, as the present Duke dislikes it as a residence. He has removed the books from the Library, and I should think the carpets and furniture from the other rooms. There was not a single fire in any room except the kitchen, and by some strange coincidence, there were the preparations for a funeral both in the lodge by which we entered, and in that by which we left the castle.

Do not think me very fastidious if I was not much pleased with Arundel Castle. If there had been more to admire, I should not have enjoyed it much without you.

Ever, my dearest Julia,
Most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

March 30, 1820.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

I am quite delighted at the thought that this is the last letter I shall write to you, the last from Bognor, at least, and I earnestly hope it will be long,

very long, ere I shall be under the necessity of writing to you at all. Now I hope you intend to make amends for your silence during my absence when I do see you, and to answer all my letters, by telling me everything you have done since we parted, for everything will be interesting to me. I was tantalised with the hopes of a message from you this morning, but just as Lady Floyd was about to give it me, she suddenly breaks off, and says "Julia will reserve the message she intended to send you until you meet."

I fear we shall not bid adieu to Bognor before half-past nine. However, we shall be in town at five, or soon after. I shall be very happy to accept an invitation which Lady Floyd has been good enough to give me, to dine in Seymour Street on Saturday, and unless we arrive at an earlier hour than I expect, I will dress for dinner before I come to Seymour Street, so that I can stay there without returning home again before seven. You will laugh at me for being so very precise and particular, but I give myself credit for any arrangement which will enable me to stay half-an-hour longer with you.

I hope you have had two as beautiful days in London as yesterday was and this day is at Bognor, and that you will have taken two very long walks. I hope too that the genius who presides over the weather will be as propitious from the second of April as he was from the second of March, though I shall be almost indifferent with respect either to his favour or his rage while I can have the happiness of being with her who is dearer to me than all the world beside.

Ever my own Julia,
Yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

The next letter is addressed to the miraculous Frances, Lady Shelley, whose diary, with all its

Wellington correspondence, was published in 1912. She had been married in 1807 to Sir John Shelley, 6th Bart., of Maresfield in Sussex. After a victorious social career of over thirty years up to 1840, she opened another not less successful epoch at Lonsdale House, Fulham, where, for another generation, she entertained all the worthies of the Victorian age. In her eighty-second year she resolved to build herself a new residence at Cowes, but this third social incarnation was cut short by death, five years later in 1873.

It was in January 1819 that she first met Peel at Maresfield. At first sight he did not find favour in her eyes, for "he spoke of shooting and country pursuits in a condescending manner." But this first impression speedily changed into the opinion "that so far from Mr. Peel's manner being unpleasant, he reminds me more of Metternich than any Englishman I ever encountered." In this very singular verdict she remained so fixed that she repeats "he is undoubtedly the English Metternich. He is at this moment idle. Will he rise to superiority or will he give up public life? *Nous verrons.*"

The acquaintance seems to have ripened so fast that in November 1819 she notes that "at Mr. Peel's dinner yesterday, I was the only woman present."

STANHOPE STREET,
April 4, 1820.

DEAR LADY SHELLEY,

Why do you conclude your kind note with a request that you may hear from me, as if it had been possible that I should otherwise have omitted first to assure you that the report is true and that your

predictions are to be fulfilled, and in the next place to return you my best acknowledgments for the kind feelings which prompted your letter?

I never made the boast which is attributed to me that my wife would not be a politician, and I am sure if I am to consider you one, I should have retracted it, had it been made.

When you return to town you will still find me (and your authority alone would justify me in using the phrase), in possession of my liberty, and I assure you fully participating in your desire that Miss Floyd should become acquainted with you.

Pray give my kindest regard to Shelley, and believe me ever, dear Lady Shelley,

Very faithfully yours,

R. P.

With reference to the allusion to politics and matrimony in the above letter it may be noted that his wife in later years spoke of herself as "no politician."

The marriage took place on June 8, 1820. They went down to Drayton, and the next letter is from the old Sir Robert to his daughter-in-law.

TAMWORTH,
August 4, 1820.

DEAREST JULIA,

I thank you for your note, and was much pleased to learn that you reached the Capital in good health and with safety. The day after you left us my son Edmund, on returning from dinner at the Town Hall in Tamworth with the same carriage and horse, which I thought much too gay for a lady, that Robert and yourself occasionally used, after clearing the bridge near Tamworth, Edmund and his servant were thrown violently out of the Tilbury, and are still confined with bruises, though free from danger. Though

a foxhunter, after the perils to which he is daily familiar, may laugh at danger in a carriage, may I implore you not to be carried in a gig or Tilbury drawn by a spirited hunter.

Robert mentioned that he would consult a physician whilst in London, and if his health is not restored, you had better defer a visit on the Continent, as you are not likely to meet with professional men equally gifted with those in England.

When you wish to be removed from scenes of bustle and noise, oblige us with your company. Either the loss of your company or being separated from their native soil have occasioned your first essays in gardening to droop in their foliage, though I hope that it will prove only a temporary misfortune, and that when they are reconciled to their new situation and cheered by the daily visits of their young nurse, they will live to welcome your return.

Make my best regards to those friends and relatives whom you have made mine, and believe me, dearest Julia,

Yours most affectionately,

ROBERT PEEL.

Early in his married life Peel's political prospects underwent a marked change. Since 1818 he had received several offers of Cabinet rank, but had uniformly declined. In response to a further offer of Lord Liverpool made in November 1821, Peel writes that "the habits of retirement in which I have indulged since I quitted Ireland, and the happiness of my domestic life" which had hitherto induced him to refrain from office, would not now preclude him from accepting the seals of the Home Office. Accordingly, in January 1822, he entered upon his memorable tenure of that department until April 1827.

Upon his political career during that period this is

not the occasion to dwell. Suffice it to record the opinion of his contemporary Canning that he was the best Home Secretary that this country had ever known. Into his political work I do not enter. He passed eight Acts mitigating and consolidating the Criminal Law, which had hitherto been dispersed throughout two hundred and fifty old statutes, with such effect that Sir James Mackintosh used to declare of this reform that he could almost think that he had lived in two different countries, and conversed with people who spoke two different languages. Also, he wiped out, or allowed to expire, all those laws imposing extraordinary restrictions on the liberty of the subject which had been the legacy of the long period of the Napoleonic Wars. "I may be a Tory—I may be an Illiberal—but the fact is undeniable, that when I first entered upon the duties of the Home Department, there were laws in existence which imposed upon the subjects of this realm unusual and extraordinary restrictions: the fact is undeniable that those laws have been effaced.[1]

Their early years of married life were passed partly at Lulworth Castle in Dorsetshire, which he had rented, and partly at 12, Great Stanhope Street, while his new house was building in Whitehall Gardens. The country place had sporting attractions, for, though he might hint during the time of courtship at worldliness in another, he could also amuse himself not a little on due occasions of leisure. As a bachelor, for instance, he had enjoyed such parties as the following at Cluny Castle:

I went to Scotland [he writes from Drayton in

[1] Speech of May 1, 1827: *Speeches*, vol. i, p. 509.

October 1818] and remained five weeks among the mountains of the Badenoch district. My brother William, Colonel Yates, and I were of the party. We had one of the best houses in Inverness-shire, a modern castle. We had an enormous district of country, plenty of grouse, of which we slew about thirteen hundred, and I took my cook there, to gild the decline of day.

We had supreme dominion, so far as the chase is concerned, over uncounted thousands of acres. Loch Ericht, Loch Laggan, and Loch Dhu, and the streams from a thousand hills, were ours. We had hind and hart, hare and roe, black game and grouse, partridge and ptarmigan, snipe and wild-duck. We had Highlanders for our guides, and Highland ponies without shoes, and no civilised beings within ten miles of us.

I really left Cluny with regret. There was so much novelty in the mode of life, so much wildness and magnificence in the scenery, so much simplicity and unaffected kindness among the people.[1]

To his friend Sir Walter Scott he writes in September 1822, inviting him to Lulworth:

A distance of five hundred miles makes me despair of seeing you at Lulworth Castle, but if you ever come to the South-West of England, come under the impression that Lulworth never received a more welcome guest. I can promise you a castle, two abbeys, and a monastery, besides a Roman Camp and Tumuli without end.

A little later he again writes to Sir Walter, in July 1824, as regards the new gallery now taking shape at Whitehall Gardens:

I am building a new house, and in it a gallery for pictures, and I want above all things a portrait of you,

[1] Cf. Parker, *Sir Robert Peel*, vol. i, p. 318.

but no pencil but Lawrence's will satisfy me. He is to paint for me his own portrait, Davy's, and the Duke of Wellington's, and he has painted for me Lord Eldon's and Lord Stowell's. So much for the fine arts, science, war, and law. For every branch of literature, there is a "Knight of the Shire, who represents them all." And my gallery will be incomplete till his portrait is added to the number. Are you likely to be soon in London, and when you come, will you give me so much time as will enable Lawrence to gratify my wishes? [1]

The following letters are addressed to his wife at Lulworth Castle, in the course of 1823. "My little darlings" are his eldest daughter Julia, afterwards Countess of Jersey, and his eldest son Robert, afterwards 3rd Bart., born respectively in 1821 and 1822.[2]

WINDSOR CASTLE,
August 21, 1823, 2 o'clock.

MY DEAREST LIFE,

I write this from Windsor Castle, and shall take the chance of being able to put it into the Post Office as I pass through.

I had a melancholy journey yesterday leaving my own Julia, and all that is dear to me, behind me. I thought of nothing else but you and my little darlings.

I reached Windsor last night about nine, and have been here the whole of the day. Sir Charles Long, Lord Liverpool, and Lord Maryborough are arrived. There is, I believe, no dinner, so that I shall reach London by 5 or 6 o'clock.

The King is coming! so adieu, my darling Life.

My own Julia, your affectionate husband,

R. P.

[1] Cf. Parker, *Sir Robert Peel*, vol. i, p. 365.

[2] Born 1822, died 1895; in Diplomatic Service 1844–50; M.P. 1850–80 and 1884–6; Chief Secretary for Ireland 1861–5; G.C.B. and Privy Councillor; married Lady Emily Hay 1856.

WHITEHALL,
Friday evening, *August* 22, 1823, 4 o'clock.

MY OWN JULIA,

(For by what more tender name can I call you) I now begin my letter of this day to you.

Stanhope St. is very dull and dreary to me, more even than the Office, for in Stanhope St. I see everything that reminds me every minute that I am alone. I need no such remembrances.

Oh, my Darling, you never are out of my mind, for even when the thoughts of the little ones occupy it, they do not exclude the thought of you.

I arrived in Town about ½ past 6 yesterday. It has been raining the whole of this morning, and as yet I have not been able to inspect our house. I just walked round by the Chapel, and saw the progress that had been made externally, but as I saw also "The Chin"[1] perched upon the wall of his house I determined to postpone my visit. It rather struck me that the proportion of wall to windows in the wall was smaller than usual; however, this will give us more light.

As for the thousand pounds, I shall have ten times more pleasure in seeing my own Love expend it than in the purchase of any pictures. Besides, my father would require to see something for his thousand pounds.

This morning after breakfast Charles appeared with a note which I was perfectly certain, as he entered the room, was from the Dowager, and with the usual remark "Lady Floyd's servant waits for an answer." The note is a very good specimen and I send it to my own. Is it not extraordinary what information she has of our movements? The gentleman she met at dinner must have been someone actually employed by her to look out for our arrival. Only observe that the gentleman has his eyes so peculiarly constructed that he not only sees me arrive

[1] Sir A. C. Grant.

at ½ past 6, but sees me arrive "for three weeks." How a person coming to London for three weeks differs in appearance from one coming for ten days I do not know. No one shall ever prepare my dinner for me in *my own way*, but my own, my dearest Julia.

I merely answered her letter "Dear Lady Floyd, As I am only come here for a very short time, I persuaded Julia not to encounter the fatigue of two long journeys within a few days. I left her pretty well and our children have benefited by the sea air. Very truly yours, Rob. Peel." Do not think I write coldly of you and of our darlings if, when I write to other persons, I merely write your names. The simplicity of my expressions proceeds from feelings the very opposite of cold ones. I should think it a profanation of such feelings to write about them to others who could never understand or enter into them.

There is no card at Stanhope St. but one from the Murrays for the 30th. It is unlucky enough that Lord Liverpool leaves Coombe for Fonthill, I believe, and does not return till Friday next, the 29th, and asked me to dine with him the 30th at Coombe. I told him I was engaged to a christening, and that nothing should induce me to stay beyond the 30th.

I keep skipping from one subject to another, but I am not writing to you, I am talking to my own Julia and telling her all the little nothings that will be something to her, because they concern one that is part of herself.

Give two kisses to little Julia and to Bobby from me. They will understand nothing else from me.

And believe me, my dearest Julia,

Your *truly* affectionate husband,

R. P.

The following letter refers to the third Marquis of Hertford, the original of the Marquis of Steyne in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, and of Lord Monmouth in

the *Coningsby* of Disraeli. The Marchioness of Hertford had been Maria Fagniani, the adopted daughter of the eighteenth-century wit George Selwyn. Her wealth had been derived from three gentlemen who disputed the honour of her parentage and who had composed their dispute by combining to leave her their respective fortunes. As regards the character of Lord Hertford it may be charitably noticed, as early as 1821, that he could refer to "my hereditary right to a cell in Bedlam,"[1] and perhaps this may explain much in his singular career. Writing in September 1822, Peel can say of him, "I like him. He is a gentleman, and not an everyday one.[2]" But I cannot help supposing that a common love of sport was really the chief attraction in this acquaintance.

The Duchess referred to below is the Duchess of Richmond. Lawrence was the brother of Peel, and had married Lady Jane Lennox, daughter of the fourth Duke of Richmond, in 1822.

Wilkie, also referred to below, was, of course, the famous artist whose eventual death and burial at sea were so splendidly commemorated by the brush of Turner. "These sketches" may probably refer to the fact that, in July 1822, following upon his visit to Scotland in connection with the tour of George IV in that country, Wilkie had commenced making studies for a picture of John Knox preaching before the Lords of the Congregation. This picture was eventually bought by Peel, and is now in the National Gallery, having been included in the purchase of the Peel Collection.

The Lord Bexley, here otherwise mentioned as

[1] Croker, *Correspondence*, vol. i, p. 242. [2] Ibid., p. 241.

"Van," was Vansittart. He had become Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1812, until, having evolved from his inner consciousness "the most curious specimen of the most ruinous species of borrowing that the wit of man could devise,"[1] he had retired, receiving the not inconsiderable solatium of a seat in the Cabinet, a peerage, and a pension of £3,000 a year.

STANHOPE STREET,
August 24, 1823.

MY DEAREST,

I have just got the enclosed from Lord Hertford, which is as usual very civil and kind. He never wishes to separate us. I have just told him that we cannot be of his party.

The Speaker is in Paris, and I hear that the woman who seems to have infatuated him is there too. I was told yesterday that she is living with him in charge of his children, at least living in the same house with them, and of course in constant communication with them. I hope this is not true. To think of exposing his daughter to such society!

I hear nothing new from Her Ladyship, but I got the enclosed note from the Duchess this morning. I suppose the subject on which she wishes to see me must be somethng relative to Lawrence and Jane Lawrence.

I enclose to my darling a letter I have got from Wilkie this morning. I must go to see these sketches. How I wish you could go with me!

I saw Lord Bexley this morning, who is repairing his house in town and rebuilding his house in the country.

You may judge what a desert London must be when a visit from Van is thus recorded.

The weather is horrible, a settled rainy sort of

[1] *Annual Register*, 1822, p. 132.

gloom. I hope it does not prevent you taking the little Chicks to the seaside. I have little Bobby before me sprawling about in a violent rage—"And me too, Papa," as little Julia would be sure to say.

Believe me, my dearest Love,
Ever your true and devoted husband,
R. P.

In the following letter it cannot be supposed that the terms of reprobation include Lord Bathurst. He was the eminently esteemed statesman who had begun his career under Pitt, and, after holding several most exalted offices, such as those of Foreign Secretary and President of the Board of Trade, completed his career as President of the Council in the Wellington Government of 1828–30 and in the same Cabinet as Peel.

WHITEHALL,
Wednesday, *August* 25, 1823.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

All your letters have come safely to me, and if it were possible, every letter you write to me would make you more dear to me.

But my heart is quite full, and therefore my affectionate love for you does not admit of increase.

What shall I bring for Bobby, my little darling boy? The very mention of his name makes my heart warm towards the little fellow and long to have him in my arms. I am sure he will not have forgotten me.

His amusements are very manly, and I think and hope that he would soon tear to pieces any toy in the shape of a doll, but I must bring another lady for my little Julia.

I will do everything in my power to prevent anyone coming to us soon after my return to Lulworth. I hear Lord Westmorland and I suppose Lady G. Fane



JULIA PEEL (AFTERWARDS COUNTESS OF JERSEY).

From a mezzotint by Samuel Cousins, R.A., after a portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.

were at Lord Bathurst's. I do hope we shall hear nothing at all of them. We are little suited for such people at any time.

My dearest Love, how it afflicts me to hear that you are not well, and suffer so from fever. God Almighty bless you!

Believe me,
Your most affectionate and truly attached husband
R. P.

WHITEHALL,
August 26, 1823.

MY DEAREST LIFE,

I came down earlier than usual to the Office to get my own Darling's letters.

I did not sleep at Bromley Hill last night, but returned to Town.

We had the Archbishop and Mrs. Sutton, and Lord and Lady Manners. You never saw so vulgar a woman as Mrs. Sutton. However, she has the good sense to hold her tongue, for I did not hear her utter one single word. The Archbishop could give but a meagre account of the robbery at Lambeth, and the whole affair must have been greatly exaggerated. He says he lost nothing, that, though the boxes which contained his papers were opened, the papers themselves were untouched, and he even doubted whether there was more than one person concerned in the attempt. He seems to look upon the whole as a very trifling concern. I could not help thinking of Mrs. Sutton's Coronation dress when I saw the lady herself, and lamenting that so much finery had been thrown away.

I saw Wilkie on Sunday and chose one of the sketches he had made, which I will describe to my own Love when I have the happiness of again rejoining her. To say that I am tired of London would ill express my pain at being separated from you. To-day

is very gloomy, but Stanhope St. would be dull to me now, on the finest day.

Do you think, my Julia, if there were an error in your letters it would be discovered by me? Oh, my own Love, I read them with such feelings that if there were fifty errors in them I should never discover them. They are full of affection to me, and there can be no error in the language of Truth and Affection. But when I see your letters to other persons, possibly an error might strike me if there were one, but I never see anything which is not just what it ought to be.

Smirke [1] has just been here, and I have been hinting to him that the bedrooms are rather low. He has promised me to raise them half a foot, though he says they are already higher than London houses in general.

I think it possible we may have to adjourn the Council for some time owing to the want of attendance, but I cannot bear the thought of being detained beyond Saturday. If we adjourn it, it will probably be till November. I am writing to Lord Bathurst to say that I mean to leave Town on Saturday.

Ever, my darling Julia,
Your true love and husband,
R. P.

WHITEHALL,
August 28, 1823.

MY OWN JULIA,

I send my darling a letter from Miranda.[2] I dined yesterday with Lord Hertford. We dined at six. They went to Astley's, but as Lord H. said he was commissioned to invite his party to Mrs. Lane Fox's box, and as I had not the slightest wish to make her acquaintance, I declined going.

I hear that she, Mrs. Arbuthnot, the Duchess of Rutland, and Lady Caroline Powlett have a little set of their own—a pretty set they are, I have no doubt.

[1] The architect of Whitehall Gardens.

[2] Lady Fuller, sister of Lady Peel and wife of Sir John Fuller.

Arbuthnot is just arrived in town, and will stay here, I fancy, while Lord Liverpool stays. Mrs. Arbuthnot is in the country.

I will certainly bring the humming top for Bobby. I have no doubt it will amuse him, and it is a capital toy for him. God bless my little ones. I do hope they have not forgotten me. Has little Julia received any scratches in her wars with Bobby? She behaved very well when she received her last wounds.

The House advances, and everything in regard to it goes on most satisfactorily. The view from the bedroom floor is superb. When the whole is finished, and the distinction between our house and the Chin's next house is not visible, it will look like a palace. If it were a cottage I should be happy and content to live there with my dearest Julia.

Your affectionate husband,

R. P.

The following letters describe a visit to Sudburn, the seat of Lord Hertford in Suffolk. Frederick Augustus, Duke of York, mentioned as of the party, was the second son of George III. He had had the singular experience of having been made a Hanoverian Bishop at the early age of five months, but on coming of age had resigned the labours, though not the emoluments, of that office. He had been otherwise devoted to the profession of arms. Though a Commander on whom victory had never waited or was destined to wait, he had been made Commander-in-Chief by George III as long ago as 1798. A very popular and a very affable sportsman, whose racing stable was superintended by Greville, the famous diarist, and whose Column in St. James's Park bears what witness it can to his fame.

He was a great friend, and when Peel's third child

was born in October 1823, the Duke stood godfather and the child was named Frederick after him. I have found among these letters a royal relic in the shape of a lock of this prince's hair.

Huskisson, also mentioned as of the party, was the eminent financial statesman of those days. A few months prior to this date he had accepted the post of President of the Board of Trade, where, actively supported by Peel, he had advanced quickly and decisively in the direction of Free Trade.

The Arbuthnot also mentioned had held an infinity of diplomatic and other posts, among them that of Ambassador at Constantinople on the occasion when our fleet had forced the Dardanelles. He was now a member of Parliament and at the head of the Department of Woods and Forests. What was socially more important, he was husband of Harriet, daughter of the Hon. Henry Fane. This pair were the famous friends of Wellington, with whom Arbuthnot lived in later years as confidential friend at Apsley House.

SUDBURN,
Monday morning, 9. a.m., *December* 1823.

MY OWN DEAREST JULIA,

I am writing to you before breakfast, as I find the post goes out at 3 or 4 o'clock in the day, before we shall return from shooting.

I shall get up a little earlier each morning that I may have the happiness of writing to my only Love.

I arrived here yesterday just at 7, and as they were sitting down to dinner. I found an enormously long table with nearly 20 covers, but only 6 or 7 guests. The Duke of York, Croker, Huskisson, Henry Baring, and a Major Ellison and Mrs. Ellison.

I was soon succeeded by the Duke of Wellington,

and he was followed by Mr. and Mrs. Arbuthnot and two Miss Arbuthnots. After all came Lord Westmorland and Mr. Evelyn, I believe, but they did not arrive until after I had gone to bed. That is all the news I have for my own darling. No one is yet up. Write to me without fail a long letter every day. Tell me everything that another might think of little consequence. God bless our little ones, and grant that you have another account of little Bobbie being very *riotous*. Believe me, my dearest Life, my heart is ever with you present or absent.

With unceasing love,

Your own own-own,

R. P.

Tuesday morning, *December* 1823.

MY OWN DEAREST JULIA,

I did not get your most welcome letter of Sunday until this morning. Mr. Hobhouse was from home when it reached his house on that day, and did not return until after the post. It and your letter of Monday came together. I am grateful to God for the improved health of our darling boy.

Believe me I never omit to pray for you and our little ones. I send you a whole budget of letters.

I have little news to send you from this, except indeed that yesterday when the Duke of Wellington had fired three or four shots, he was taken ill with a giddiness in the head and forced to return home. However, he was better at dinner.

The Duke of York inquires most kindly after you and his little godson. He asked yesterday what age he was.

We had excellent sport in shooting yesterday.

Lord H. has made this house, without any pretensions to finery, by the aid of drugget and chintz very comfortable. He has four rooms *en suite*, a drawing-room with bookcases in it, two small rooms for writing

and playing cards, and a billiard room. They are all lighted in the evening. The billiard room is a particularly comfortable one. Lady G. Fane (who it appears arrived with Lord Westmorland) asked me if I had heard that Lady G. Bathurst was to be married to Colonel Berkeley. She asked this doubtingly and not knowing the report to be true. She had better marry Lord Fife than Colonel Berkeley.

But to return to all that is really interesting to us—our dear little ones. Tell me that they are well.

God Almighty bless you, my dearest love.

If I could love you more, the sight of others and their odious ways would make me do so.

My dearest Julia,
Your devoted husband,
R. P.

Tuesday night, *December* 1823.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

I have little to tell you that can be very interesting to you—for to tell you how I love you is unnecessary. I am glad you have got over the operation of the dentist. I told you that the gentlest treatment would appear very rude to you.

We have had no additions to the party here—and I conclude shall have none. I am writing to my own Tuesday night, so that this is the second letter which I have written to you to-day. I dare say I shall add a little postscript to-morrow morning before I send off my letter.

Shall I follow Croker's example and tell you how the party is occupied? But as Huskisson and I are writing together in a small room, I must step into the adjoining ones and reconnoitre.

The Duke of York, Duke of Wellington, Mrs. Arbuthnot, and Mr. Evelyn are playing at whist. (Mr. Evelyn is an Irishman invited here to sit up playing with H.R.H. when everyone else is tired.) Mrs.

Ellison and the Miss Arbuthnots are sitting at a table working. Mrs. E. is a very short lady with a very large head in proportion to her figure, which I think is a little deformed. This lady, I am told, Lord Hertford thinks very good-looking, and she sits at dinner at his left hand. Croker is at the same time chattering in the next room and drawing a plan with a pair of compasses. He assumes here more, I should think, than Lord Hertford would long admire. Major Ellison and Lord Westmorland are playing at billiards.

Lord Pollington, who is a most singular character with an apparent horror of the truth, is talking about himself and his exploits. Henry Baring is very unwell with a sick headache and confined to his room.

There is an *interior* for my own darling!

The shooting to-day was still better than that of yesterday. Kiss my little Freddy for me, and God grant that to-morrow's post may bring me a good account from Lulworth.

Good-night, my own Love. I kiss the little locket every time I take it off or put it on.

Your own loved and loving husband,

R. P.

P.S.—Wednesday morning. The post is come in and no letter from you. I am sure there must be some mistake. Do not, my darling, send your letters to the office; direct them to Sudburn, Woodbridge.

Jonathan Peel, mentioned in the following letter, was a younger brother born in 1799. He married Lady Alice Kennedy, youngest daughter of Archibald Marquis of Ailsa, in March 1824. He sat in Parliament from 1826 to 1868, and among other offices held that of Secretary of State for War in 1858 and again in 1866. But of course it is as a racing man that his name is best remembered, his racing career having lasted sixty years, up till his death in 1879.

His fame on the Turf culminated when his horse Orlando carried the purple jacket and orange cap to victory in the Derby of 1844. On this occasion his other horse Ionian ran second. A never-to-be-forgotten race, seeing that though Running Rein had come in first, it was found to be a four-year-old, and was disqualified for the astonishing fraud. The seat of Jonathan was at Marble Hill, Twickenham.

Robert Lord Henley, also mentioned below, married Peel's youngest sister, Harriet Eleonora, in March 1824.

Half-past four, Wednesday evening, *December* 1823.

MY OWN DEAREST,

I am waiting here in hourly expectation of hearing the result of the trials at Hertford. I have a messenger there to bring me the earliest accounts. I should think there cannot be a doubt that they will be over to-night.

I wish I could settle everything so as to be enabled to set out very early to-morrow morning. But it is now so late in the day, that I almost despair.

Jonathan is in town, and will come with me to Lulworth. He was just setting out for Lulworth when he heard by accident that I was expected in town. Pray, my darling, have the small turret room in which Mr. Lushington slept got ready for him. Perhaps we may arrive very late to-morrow night.

5 o'clock. I have just settled that I will return to the office at 10 o'clock to-night, to take my chance of hearing finally from Hertford. I have no doubt, however, that Hunt's solicitor and Council will require to see me, and most likely I shall not be able to arrange an interview with them to-night.

Jonathan and I are going to dine together. I have seen nobody, for I have been denied to everyone in order that I might not be unnecessarily detained.

I am very dull without you. God Almighty bless you. Believe me, my heart is incapable of change. Love me as you always have done, and you may rely, my dearest Life, on the ardent and unceasing attachment and fidelity of your own husband.

Kiss the little ones for me, and tell them their papa never forgets them.

Lord Henley has called on us both. I met him by accident to-day, but I will reserve the little I have to tell you until we meet. Do not send the horses to Wareham: I will write to Blacklock.

R. P.

SUDBURN,
Thursday morning, 10 o'clock, *December* 1823.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

I have postponed writing this morning until after the arrival of the post, and I have just got your letter of yesterday, and the good account from Lulworth. God bless the little ones that are there. I thank you, my darling, for the gloves and the muffetees. The muffetees shall be my companions on this day's sport, more from the pleasure of wearing what you have sent me than because I require them to keep me warm.

Yesterday was a very bad day, but a wager was made between H. Baring and Lord Hertford that I could not kill in the course of it

One pheasant
One red-legged partridge
One common partridge
One snipe
One Jack snipe
One woodcock
One wild duck
One rabbit
One hare.

I got up very early, that is I began shooting at 10, and won the match before one. H. Baring lost one hundred guineas. I was very near losing three hundred. I gave you yesterday a specimen of the mode in which the evening is passed here. Each evening is much the same. The Duke of York, Wellington, Mrs. Arbuthnot, and Mr. Evelyn play at whist the whole night. Some write letters. Last night Lord Pollington attempted to amuse the idle by singing ridiculous songs and imitating actors. I had heard him before, and cannot say that I was much amused.

You know, my darling, that I wish you were here with me, and with what delight I shall see you on Sunday next. It would be difficult for me to say when I do not think of you. You are always present to my thoughts. Kiss my little Frederick for me. Believe me, my darling love,

Your true and devoted husband,

R. P.

Thursday night, *December* 1823.

MY DEAREST LIFE,

This is Thursday night, and on Sunday I shall have the happiness of seeing my own again. I shall be with you early on Sunday unless I am detained in travelling by night by the want of horses. I am just going to write to Ipswich to have four horses here at 10 o'clock on Saturday night, so that I am making preparations to rejoin my darling love. I still hope that we shall be able to rejoin our treasures at Lulworth on Wednesday evening. Do you think it will be sufficient notice to give to write on Monday night to Winchester to have rooms for ourselves and little Freddy? I think it will, as that will be a day's complete notice. If my darling thinks not, you can write on Saturday to the George and order them.

The Dukes of York and Wellington, Mr. Evelyn

and Mrs. Arbuthnot are as usual playing at whist. Arbuthnot, Huskisson, Lord Westmorland, and I have just played three rubbers at another table. It is almost bedtime. God Almighty bless you, my dearest Love.

Your devoted husband,
R. P.

Another visit to Sudburn followed in 1824, the party being composed of much the same individuals as before. This time, Mrs. Peel, from her solitude at Lulworth, finds opportunity for a little irony at the expense of the too worldly Robert. The matrimonial mercury fell rapidly for a moment, as indicated by the reading "Your attached husband."

SUDBURN,
Sunday night, *December* 1824.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

We arrived here about half-past six, after as prosperous a journey as a journey could be for me when I was leaving my own Julia and my little ones. In the different towns we passed through there were crowds assembled to see the Duke of York. The party at dinner was Duke of York, Duke of Wellington, Croker, myself, Seymour and Mrs. Seymour, Huskisson and Mrs. Huskisson, Colonel Cooke, Mr. Evelyn, Lord Pollington, a great nuisance, Lord Hertford, Mr. and Mrs. Arbuthnot, who came with the Duke of Wellington. Lord Westmorland and, I suppose, Lady G. Fane have not arrived. I wish you could see Mrs. Huskisson's dress and affected manner, making ugliness fifty times more ugly.

The Duke of Wellington since dinner has been giving a long account of all that happened at the battle of Waterloo and afterwards. The Duke of York inquired very kindly after you and little William.

Tell me, my darling, how the eye is. I hope the inflammation is quite gone down. I shall have no letter from you to-morrow morning, but I shall expect a long one on Tuesday. God bless you and bless the little ones. My love to all.

Your devoted husband,

R. P.

SUDBURN,
Tuesday morning, *December* 1824.

MY OWN DEAREST,

Home, sweet home; I long to be back again. I turn away from the fifteen little black tea-pots which I see spread out on the breakfast table before me, and think of our little round table, my Julia opposite to me, and little Julia and Bobby dividing the spoils of biscuits.

The shooting was very excellent yesterday, but the shooting over, my pleasure is at an end. We killed 130 or 140 pheasants, and 23 woodcock. There are too many guns, and I have a particular dislike to Lord Pollington, who is invited here to crow like a cock for the amusement of the party after dinner, and seems to consider himself on the footing of Mathews or any other professional buffoon.

How poor and *fade* is everything compared with home. I feel really quite uneasy in society, and last night went up to my room two hours before the rest of the party, and read there till I went to bed.

I must say I am pleased with the compliment which Lord Hertford paid to you by not asking you to this house. He could not indeed venture to ask my own, my dearest Julia, but still he did ask Mrs. Huskisson and Lady G. Fane. Mrs. A. I put out of the question. Yesterday arrived to dinner Sir Richard Strachan. This quite accounts for his not inviting you here. He paid homage to your virtue and good name. There is something too disgusting in seeing such a man

as Sir Richard Strachan. I can behave to neither of them with common civility.

God bless you, my own love. Kiss all the little ones for me.

Your affectionate and devoted husband,

R. P.

Mrs. Peel to R. Peel at Sudburn

1824.

MY OWN, MY DEAREST LOVE,

I have no letter from Drayton to enclose, but I am sure we may conclude Sir Robert is quite well again.

As the appointment to be Governor of the Charterhouse is due to you on every consideration, and from Lord Liverpool individually, I have no doubt but that our wishes on the subject will be immediately accomplished. Let me know the answer to your letter.

I do not understand how the house at Sudburn which you used to describe to me as small and uncomfortable in bedroom furniture can accommodate such a very large party as the one now assembled within its adulterous walls.

I have purposely avoided the Dow. until last night, when I succeeded in getting rid of further importunities to take tea at her house by asking her for just two hours, to ours. She came at eight, and left me, to my relief I must say, at ten. The conversation was almost entirely of America, and she quite bored me with reading pages descriptive of the outlandish scenery, but this was far better than suffering her to deal in insinuating mischief which I very soon put a stop to, but which she attempted more than once. I have ordered myself to be denied if she calls. I think her spirit of interference yet alive, though she does less to manifest it.

Our dear children are all around me at this moment, quite well. They often ask for dear Papa. I am a

bad substitute in the drawing department. Poor little things, they are very very fond of you. I can copy for them pretty well, but yours is original, and delights them. I long indeed for the happiness of our reunion. God bless you.

Believe me, ever your most affectionate and devoted,

JULIA PEEL.

SUDBURN,
December 23, 1824.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

I have just received your letter, and I presume, as you consider the party here so perfect and fashionable, that my letter of yesterday may have surprised you. I do not wish that you should forward the letters and books which have arrived in Stanhope Street, as they could not arrive here until after I shall have left it.

I am truly happy to hear so good an account of the dear children. God bless them. I hope they do not forget me. If they do, they would ill return the love and affection which I have for them. Thank God that little Frederick is better. I think we must have a different day for christening the little fellow from that on which we give the first dinner in the new house, as two parties on the same day would be too large. I am very sorry to hear that you still cannot bear to look at small print. Dearest Julia, I am ever

Your affectionate husband,

R. P.

SUDBURN,
December 1824.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

I shall be in Stanhope Street to-morrow, I hope in time for dinner, but the difficulty of getting horses may prevent me.

Rely upon it your letters shall not be seen or

touched by anyone. I should have but little satisfaction in the thought that anyone but myself had seen a letter from you to me, during my separation from you, in which there is such a sentence as this :—

"How will you bear to think of *one*, compared to *fifteen? I know it is nothing in the scale.*"

I will only remark upon this that I would suffer much rather than write such a sentence to you, at a time when I was absent from you.

Is the repetition of the word *fashion* meant to be severe? I only feel its injustice and unkindness if it is.

Kiss my children for me. I hope they will always justly estimate my affection for them.

I am, dearest Julia,
Your attached husband,
R. P.

Shortly after this, in 1825, Peel determined to provide at Harrow a gold medal to be annually adjudged to the best Latin composition in prose. Among the prize winners are to be noticed such well-known Harrow names as those of Thomas Dyke Acland, 1826, T. B. Colenso, 1842, H. Montagu Butler, 1849, George Otto Trevelyan, 1857, Matthew White Ridley, 1860, and Charles Gore, 1871. To this record it may be added that the medal has been won by three members of the Peel family—by Frederick Peel in 1841, by the present Viscount Peel in 1885, and by myself in 1886. Such were some of the men "Numismate viri honoratissimi Roberti Peel Baronetti dignati."

CHAPTER IV

BEHIND THE SCENES OF OFFICE

These were laborious and happy years of official and family life. Lord Liverpool was Prime Minister and took the part of ignoring the ever-troublesome Catholic question, upon which the two real rulers of the country, Canning, as Foreign Secretary, and Peel, as Home Secretary, took opposite sides with their respective followers.

The William referred to in the letter below was the third son, born in November 1824. In after years his father expressed the opinion that his abilities were of the highest order among those of his sons. As regards his character, Field-Marshal Viscount Wolseley has written as follows in an article entitled "Courage":

"I think that Captain Sir William Peel, of the Royal Navy, possessed courage of an order that I have never seen so strongly marked in any other man. During all our bombardments at Sebastopol it was his invariable practice to walk about behind his battery on the natural plateau of the ground, where he had little or no protection from the enemy's fire. This he did from no swagger, but to set an example to his men of cool contempt for danger. I can see him now with his telescope under his arm in quarter-deck fashion, halting from time to time to watch the effect of his battery upon the enemy's works, or to direct the attention of his men in charge of guns to



WILLIAM PEEL, THIRD SON, K.C.B., V.C., R.N.

some particular spot or object in the Redan or Malakoff.

"He was thus always in view; his men could always see him, and as they were down in the trench before him, and so in comparative safety, all felt that his eye was upon them, and that if he in that exposed position made so light of his great danger, they could not presume to wince under the shelter which the battery afforded them. He was not only always cool, but most particularly courteous, and there was this well-known peculiarity about his grace of manner, that the hotter the fire and the greater the danger, the more suave, or, as his men used to say, 'b——y polite' he became."[1]

Another of his companions, Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., has borne a similar testimony of the Crimean days.

"Though all our officers were brave, it was Captain Peel who inspired his followers with a part of his own nature. This man, who never quailed, felt acutely every shot and shell which passed near him, but the only outward effect was to make him throw up his head and square his shoulders, yet his nervous system was so highly strung that even a flesh wound became dangerous in his case. In 1851, when crossing the Nubian Desert, from Korosko to Abu Hamed, Peel dismounted from his camel to give water from his store to a small dying bird! To this tender-hearted man it appeared that our bluejackets should be encouraged to stand at their guns like men, and he asked four of us, two from the *Diamond* and two from the *Queen*, to set the example in the battery by always walking erect, and without undue haste.

"Next day he gave us a grand example. A shell came through the parapet and rolled into the centre

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, August 1888, p. 286.

of a small group of men, who threw themselves flat on the ground, which would not, however, have saved those nearest, for there were several boxes of powder on the ground, then being passed into the magazine. Peel, stooping down, lifted the shell, and resting it on his chest, carried it back to the parapet, and stepping on to the banquette, rolled the shell over the superior crest, on which it immediately burst.

"The following day I was eating my ration, salt pork and biscuit, on one side of a gun, when a shell burst on top of a magazine on the other side of the gun. The officer excitedly shouted, 'Shell burst in the magazine, sir.' I was obliged to abandon my dinner, to stamp out the burning bags and fill up the crater made by the explosion. While so engaged, I felt someone alongside helping me, but did not look up; for with shells striking the parapet on either side, the position was not one in which I was inclined to linger, and thus did not notice that it was Captain Peel, till the work was done, when he ordered me down. This was the beginning of a friendship which lasted till his death at Lucknow in 1858.[1]"

William took part at the age of sixteen in the operations off the coast of Syria in 1840; after that he served in China and returned to this country in September 1843. In May 1844 he passed an examination in gunnery with such distinction that his extraordinary promise called forth a very flattering public notice from Sir Charles Napier in the House of Commons.[2] After other service he became a captain in January 1849. Being on half-pay, he resolved to explore Central Africa, for which he started at the close of 1850, leaving a record of his adventures entitled *A Ride through the Nubian Desert*.

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, vol. lvi, N.S. [2] *Hansard*, May 16, 1844.

In October 1853 he commissioned the *Diamond* frigate, and from her landed to join the Naval Brigade before Sebastopol. He led the ladder party at the assault on the Redan, himself carrying the first ladder until severely wounded. For his service he received the newly instituted Victoria Cross. In 1856 he commissioned the *Shannon*, landed in India for the Mutiny, and organised and commanded the Naval Brigade, which performed such memorable services through those operations. He was severely wounded in the second relief of Lucknow, and on reaching Cawnpore, he died, in 1858. His portrait by John Lucas is in the Painted Hall at Greenwich, where his trumpet, flag, and other relics of his career have been placed next to the relics of Nelson.

WHITEHALL,
May 1825.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

We had a late house in the House of Commons last night, but, thank God, disposed of the Catholic question for this session at least. We were beaten, but all our friends attended, and all the promoters of the Bill were much disappointed that they had not a larger majority. I got your dear letter this morning, and am truly happy to hear that neither little Julia nor William suffered from their journey in the open carriage, and that the weather has been so favourable for your walks on the beach.

Tell little Julia that the east wind has nipped her lilacs in the bud, and that they are not so flourishing as when she left them.

I am sitting in the library with my windows open. I have just had a long walk in the garden with Lord Liverpool. I have been several times in your little room. I do indeed think of you and long again to be

at home, for that is my home where you and the children are.

Ever most truly and affectionately yours,

R. P.

WHITEHALL,
May 30, 1825.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

You will see the report of the proceedings at the Pitt dinner on Saturday. They drank my health with "much applause," as the phrase is. They would not, however, have seen me there if I had had my own darling with me.

My father and Jonathan were there—my father in great spirits.

What shall we do with our sweet little Willy? When must we christen him? Kiss him, and kiss them all from their dear Papa.

Tell Julia and Bobby that I was delighted with their letters, delighted and affected too. Tell them that we will have a fine game at play when I come to Brighton.

R. P.

WHITEHALL,
Tuesday, *June* 1, 1825.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

I have been very very busy all day, having been with Sir Thomas Lawrence three hours—three hours at his house. He thinks he has wonderfully improved my, or rather your, picture.

I have been twice interrupted since I began my letter by the Chancellor and the Duke of Wellington.

Between ourselves, our *own selves*, the Chancellor has got into a scrape by telling Mr. Littleton that the objection to give Brougham a silk gown as a lawyer was not made by him, the Chancellor, but by the King.

Mr. Littleton has reported to Brougham, and the

Chancellor fears that some notice will be taken of it in the House to-night.

The Duke of Wellington left Windsor this morning and had seen the King upon it. Here comes someone else!

Ever most affectionately and truly yours, my dear Love,

R. P.

WHITEHALL,
June 7, 1825.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

I am come over from the Office to be at peace for a few minutes before I go down to the House of Commons, and to write my daily letter to my Love.

I have been very very busy all the day, for I sat for three hours this morning to Sir Thomas Lawrence. He is greatly pleased with the alteration he has made in my picture, and most anxious that you should see and approve of it.

The poor Chancellor is to be attacked again to-night: I have had a visit from him in the course of the day.

Sir Thomas Lawrence is painting the Duchess of Argyll and Lady Lansdowne, not the Dowager. He has made excellent likenesses of both.

Recollect to-morrow morning at ten o'clock, and let us both put up our prayers to God together that we may long enjoy our present happiness and that our children may be a source of pride and comfort to us.

I shall kiss your picture: you see that though my head is throbbing from the hurry in which I have been for the last four hours, my consolation is to think of you.

God bless you, my love, teach the little ones to love me as we love each other.

Believe me, your true and faithful and affectionate husband,

R. P.

WHITEHALL,
June 8, 1825.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

I got your dear letter this morning before the appointed hour when I was to give that kiss which should have been given to you and not to a faint resemblance of you.

I breathe an earnest prayer to God that He may bless and protect us, make us sensible of the many blessings we enjoy, and worthy of the continuance of them.

There is something very captivating and touching in little Julia's attachment to her home, and to her own little playthings. A father's feelings towards a daughter are very tender ones, and I think of that little being with great pride and great affection.

I hope she will follow in her mother's steps, and like her be quoted as an example to wives and mothers.

May we see many happy returns of this auspicious day. God bless you, my dearest Julia, and believe me, my dearest Julia, your own true love,

R. P.

The reference above is to the fact that June 8 was the anniversary of their wedding.

WHITEHALL,
June 11, 1825.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

I enclose notes to the amount of £150. Your calculation is about £120, but it is probable you may have omitted something. If my darling will give the postboys 3*s*. for the short stages, and 3*s*. 6*d*. or 4*s*. for the long ones, they will be satisfied. Edward had better pay the landlord at each inn the money for the horses on setting out.

I think when you come to town we shall often take a walk with the little ones.

We must determine what we must do in August.

I do wish we had some place of our own. I am sure we deserve to have one, and that we should be happier there than we can be in any other manner. I wish my father would say something definite when he returns to town.

You cannot think how delightful it will be to dine together with our oriel window open. There is quite a perfume from the garden.

God bless you, my love. I look forward to Wednesday with the greatest impatience and delight. I will dine with you, and will make my excuses to the Lord Mayor for the dinner on Wednesday. Ever your most true and affectionate husband,

R. P.

The following letters record a visit paid to Somerley, the house of Mr. Henry Baring. We may notice a certain stringency of tone occurring during these and similar visits, which may perhaps be accounted for by a natural desire to minimise the social enjoyments in which his wife did not share.

Somerley,
Monday morning, half-past 9, 1825.

My own dearest Julia,

I write this in my bedroom, before I go down to breakfast. I would have written to my own angel last night if there had been any post to take my letter. I arrived here in plenty of time yesterday, and found just come before me Admiral Windham (Mrs. Baring's father) and a brother of the lady. Croker did not arrive until after dinner. He then came with an air of a man oppressed with business, having as he said been detained by important business at some small village on the road.

I do not recollect when I have been more surprised than on the appearance of Mrs. Baring in the drawing-room before dinner. I fancied I had seen her riding

in the Park, and that she was a tall woman with a fine figure. Someone told us too that though not a perfect beauty, she had fine eyes and so forth. I could scarcely believe my own eyes when I saw a short, and ugly stumpy woman. In addition to the party was an Italian singing master, who in concert with Mrs. B. made a tremendous noise at the pianoforte after dinner. My own darling, we should have been very snug here after my return from shooting, but I think I can fancy your face when you came up to me after seven hours *tête-à-tête* with the lady of the house. Kiss all the little ones for me.

Your dearest and most attached husband,

R. P.

From H. Baring's House

SOMERLEY,
October 25, 1825,

MY DEAREST, DEAREST LOVE,

My whole heart and thoughts are with you, though we are separated. Yesterday was very dull for me, as I neither saw you nor heard from you, but I have now your dear letter before me and I do fervently pray that you have continued well since you wrote it.

The game you received yesterday was not shot by me, but the moment I got out of the carriage I begged that a supply might be sent to my love. The shooting is quite wonderful. I shot yesterday 38 pheasants, 20 hares, 7 rabbits, and 2 partridges. I shot this myself.

The admiral is a very good kind man, steady, mild, gentlemanlike. I have not yet overcome my surprise at Baring's choice. She has a great power of acquiring languages, but that seems no very valuable quality at Somerley. She said she did not know how to make tea, and she told the truth. It was not said out of affectation.

She seems to take no interest in anything that goes

on in the house. I must send you the shape of her dress.

Did the little ones miss me at breakfast? Did little Julia say "Whau's Papa?" I am glad this place is not our own, I mean for ever, for it would suit us perhaps for a time; but the black boggy soil has a gloomy appearance.

God bless you, my dearest Love. I cannot tell you how paltry everything seems to me when compared with the happiness that grows out of mutual and undivided affection and love.

Believe me, my dearest, your true lover and husband.

R. P.

SOMERLEY,
1825.

How can you ask me, my dearest Love, whether your letters are too long? If you knew how I prize and delight in them you would not think that they appeared long to me. Or that the most indifferent thing told by you could fail to interest me. I am glad to hear that little Frederick seems to like his new food. I saw at once that he required something more substantial. There was something in that child, after four weeks' absence and a journey of twelve hours, putting out his little arms to come to us which I shall never forget.

If little Julia and Bobby continue so independent of each other, the one which is the weakest will join in confederacy with little Frederick—at present they do not seem to regard him much.

Baring talks of selling this place. I rather think he has been looking narrowly into his expenses and income with Mr. Charles Taylor, who leaves us this morning. Mr. Taylor told me last night that Baring felt uncomfortable here and that if anyone would give him £200,000 for the place, he would, to use Mr.

Taylor's expression, turn the key of the front door and deliver it up to the purchaser.

There are some enormous washing basins here which are most comfortable. They are nearly a yard across. I rather think they may be bought at Wedgwood's.

Kiss the little ones for me, and may God bless you and them is the fervent prayer of your attached and most affectionate husband,

R. P.

SOMERLEY,
Thursday morning, 10 o'clock, 1825.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I shall expect a very long letter from you to-morrow with a full account of all that little Julia has told you. Give her my love, and do not forget to buy the doll which I am to give her. Give my love, too, to little Bobby, our fellow-traveller, and to little Frederick,[1] who made a deep impression on me by remembering us so well after our long absence.

I have nothing to tell you but how I love you. Yes, there is one thing which amused me. When I was changing horses in Popham Lane I heard a voice address me, "How do you do, Mr. Peel? I hope you liked Stone House?" I looked out at the window and replied "Pray, Sir, who am I speaking to?" "Sir, I am the Lord Chief Justice of England's body coachman. *We* had Stone House last year."

Adieu, my dearest, and believe me ever your own,

R. P.

The following letters record a visit to Teddesley, near Lichfield, and therefore not far from Drayton.

[1] M.P. in February 1849; Under-Secretary for Colonies, 1851 to 1855; Under-Secretary for War, 1855–7; Financial Secretary to the Treasury 1859–65, when he finally ceased to be M.P.; member of Railway and Canal Commission, 1873–1906. Married in 1857 (1) Elizabeth Emily Shelley, niece of the poet, and (2) in 1879, Janet, daughter of Philip Pleydell Bouverie of Brymore, Somersetshire.

This was the seat of Mr. Littleton, who was one of the members for Staffordshire, and who after pursuing an active and honourable political career was created Baron Hatherton in 1835. Mrs. Littleton was a daughter of the Marquess Wellesley.

TEDDESLEY, NEAR LICHFIELD,
Wednesday night, *December* 7, 1825.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I will not go to bed without writing a line to my own Julia to tell her of my safe arrival and to pour out my earnest prayer that this will find her refreshed by a good night's sleep.

We left London exactly at 4 o'clock. The clock at the Horse Guards was striking 4 as I passed it, and we arrived here at 7.

The Duke of Wellington came about two hours after us. Mr. and Mrs. Littleton were very kind in their inquiries after my own love, and often said how happy they should be to see you at Teddesley.

There is a large party of sportsmen here, two Percys, a Mr. Cunliffe, Mr. Fortescue, and another person whose name I have not yet learned, Mr. Bagot and Lady Harriette Bagot. Croker was very talkative the whole way, and complained that I was just the reverse. I confess I would rather travel alone than see anyone occupying the seat in which I have so often seen the only being that with our little ones I care for.

God bless you, my sweetest love,

Your own own,

R. P.

TEDDESLEY,
December 8, 1825.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

A thousand thanks for that kind and affectionate feeling which made you write to me yesterday.

However I rejoice in your letters, I cannot wish you to write one single line which causes you fatigue. My own love may direct the letter she writes to me on Saturday to Drayton, for I think I shall certainly leave this on Saturday evening, and shall sleep on Saturday night at Drayton.

It cannot be more than 14 or 15 miles from Drayton, and perhaps my father might be hurt at my being so near and returning without seeing him. Besides, of course, it will not detain me one moment longer from my love and my home. I shall leave Drayton early on Monday morning and be at Hatfield as I proposed. I had rather be at Drayton on Sunday than here, for, the shooting over, my thoughts are far away, and I am sure I must appear to have little pleasure in society.

I played at whist all last night with the Duke of Wellington. One little story I have for my love. Croker got a note yesterday from Lord Herbert, who did not know that he was in the country, and sent the note to the Admiralty to this effect. "Dear Croker, I have just got a letter from Mr. A. Stanhope which makes me think he is mad. In spite of all that has passed in the King's Bench he has just written to me to say that unless I make him a full apology he will continue to harass me as before." That is all the note. I suppose Lord H. must again apply to the court. All this is quite between ourselves. God bless you, my own love,

Your true husband,

R. P.

TEDDESLEY,
December 10, 1825.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

Although there is no post and I therefore cannot send my letter, yet I will not debar myself of the pleasure of writing to you. I am glad that I

shall leave this to-night. There is nothing disagreeable here, but still I am away from you, and I am tired of the society of others. I shall get to Drayton about 12 or 1 at night. I have just heard an odd story. Lord Clanricarde was staying at Huskisson's. In the course of conversation Huskisson said, "This is the last lottery." Lord Clanricarde replied, "Then I will have a ticket." Lady Clanricarde advised him only to take half a ticket. He wrote to London for half a ticket, and by return of post received the information that the ticket had been drawn a prize of £30,000, and that he was entitled therefore to the half, £15,000.

I hope, my own dear Love, that I shall be able to see an improvement in you on my return. I pray to God every night to bless you and our little ones. Kiss them all for me, and tell them I do not forget them for a moment, though I have not a partridge to send them. Believe me ever my dearest love,

Your faithful and affectionate husband,

R. P.

DRAYTON MANOR,
Sunday, *December* 11, 1825.

MY DARLING LOVE,

I am just returned from Drayton Church. I arrived here last night soon after 12 o'clock, and therefore did not see my father till this morning. He is perfectly well, and was very kind and anxious in his inquiries after my own Love. He has more than once desired that I would not forget to send you his most affectionate regard. He really loves you. I am afraid I rather disturbed his plans, for he meant to go to Leamington to-day to see William and Jane. Jonathan and Alice are gone to Lord Kinnaird's. They have left their little child here.

My Love, I think I have sent you all the Drayton

news, except indeed a most extraordinary story which my father told me as we drove from church. There is at Fazely a house certainly higher than the house at Drayton. On Thursday last, a child of 3 years old, looking out of the window of the attic story, fell through the window to the ground, which is paved. Strange to say, the child was scarcely hurt in the slightest degree. The house is the inn at Fazely, the one that faces you as you drive through the town.

I have just got your last dear letter. You say that you were not at one time in the day before quite so well. Now, my sweetest Love, by the post of to-morrow, Monday, you will send your letter to Hatfield. Tell me, I entreat you, exactly how you are, and if you are not as you should be I shall come on to town to-morrow night. Do not, my own Love, now or ever, conceal from me the exact truth about yourself. If I thought you were to do so I should be always uneasy. God bless you and our little ones.

Your true and devoted husband,

R. P.

I killed more than anyone at Littleton's chasse. We had very good shooting, and it banished the headache, and has a little lessened the wearying noise in my ear. I have learned a new game at patience for us two, us only, to play at.

The following letters describe a visit to Hatfield, and then to Gorhambury:

HATFIELD,
Monday, *December* 12, 1825.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

I am just arrived here, having left Drayton at 6 o'clock this morning, and am afraid I have scarcely time to write a line by the post. I am so anxious to see you that I must come to town to-morrow. Pray desire one of the servants to sit up for me, as I am

afraid I cannot leave till after dinner. I cannot, however stay another night away, and shall certainly be in town to see my dearest love to-morrow night. There is no one here except the old Lady Salisbury and two or three men. God bless you, my sweetest love. I am not sure whether you will receive this to-morrow, for I fear it may be too late for the post. Still I could not help writing you one hasty line.

Your own, your devoted love,

R. P.

HATFIELD,
December 1825.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

I found a small party here yesterday, Dowager Lady Salisbury, Mr. Henry Wellesley, his son, Lord Maryboro', a Sir Robert Gunning, and Lady Emma Edgecumbe. The Count Villa Real was expected, but did not make his appearance. Lady Salisbury the Dowager, after winning all my money at whist, went off this morning, and Lord Maryboro' went to Gorhambury after shooting to-day. I have not heard that anyone else is expected. It was a very fine day, and we had pretty good shooting. If there is no shooting to-morrow I shall be inclined to come away after breakfast, but at any rate I shall have the happiness of seeing you to-morrow night. If Count Villa Real is a sportsman, and if he comes to dinner to-day I suppose Lord Salisbury will shoot to-morrow. Lord Salisbury has been to Lulworth on a visit to the Duke of Gloucester. You will perceive that my writing establishment is not a first-rate one. Kiss the little ones for me. Poor little Julia was surprised that I should kiss her three times yesterday. "What, three times kiss you, Papa?" God bless you, my dearest Julia, and believe me ever,

Your most attached and affectionate,

R. P.

GORHAMBURY,
January 1826.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I arrived here yesterday evening a little before seven. Lord and Lady Verulam were very kind, and have inquired after you, very sorry that they did not see you, but not at all surprised that anyone without being ill should prefer staying at home to travelling in this weather. This day, indeed, has been very fine and not very cold.

There is a very small party here. One lady, Lady Frederick Beauclerc, Lord F. Beauclerc's wife. He is a clergyman, and has a living near here. William Lamb, Mr. Irby, Mr. Seabright Tisdale, Count Ludolf, whom I was surprised to find a sportsman, and myself. We have been out shooting, and had very good sport. I think I killed about 36 head. I shall have a letter from you, my own love, to-morrow morning, and I do hope that it will bring me an excellent account of yourself and of Bobby. I suppose that little Julia has had her second sitting to-day. Did she behave well, and is any other time fixed by Sir Thomas for her to return to him? Lord and Lady Verulam were invited to Strathfieldsaye, but Lord Verulam is going to Prince Leopold's next week, and was obliged to make excuses. As I passed through Barnet, the inn-keeper told me Lord and Lady Salisbury had been suddenly called to town in the night. I believe on account of the illness of some near relative of hers. I have sent you, my darling, all my news, and finish with my constant prayer that God may bless us and our little ones. Believe me, my own Julia, with the truest love, your most affectionate and devoted husband,

R. P.

GORHAMBURY,
Monday, 7 o'clock, *January* 1826.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I must write you a line, if it be but to send my kindest love to my darling Julia.

I got here about half-past six yesterday, and found Mr. Robinson and Lady Sarah, Mr. Culling Smith and his son, Charles Drummond, Mr. Seymour and Lady Mary Seymour, and this morning arrived Mr. Ross, our common favourite.

Lord and Lady Verulam were very kind in their inquiries after you. Lady Verulam is to be confined the latter end of January. We had a miserable day to-day, and not good shooting by any means.

The house is sacrificed to an enormous hall, which is in itself exceedingly handsome, but the staircase is very poor, and the bedrooms bad.

Kiss all our little ones, little William, God bless him, included. Give my love to them. I took little Bobby down with me to see the carriage, and his affection for *four horses* revived.

God bless you, my darling. You did not send me a little line this morning, but I pray to God to bless and preserve you, and I am not therefore uneasy at not hearing from you to-day.

Ever your devoted husband,

R. P.

The three following letters are addressed to Mrs. Peel at Brighton. The Mr. Gregory referred to was William Gregory, an Harrovian who had become Under-Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland in the same year, 1812, as that in which Peel had been made Chief Secretary. He was credited with being the "dry nurse" of English statesmen in Irish affairs, and held his office for the long space of twenty years. His career has been made known to our generation by the publication in 1898 of *Mr. Gregory's Letter Box.* A great friend of Peel and his chief adviser on Ireland for many years.

As regards "the succession of Alexander," this

refers to the death of the Tsar Alexander in December 1825, the pseudo-progressive monarch who, in the words of Byron, had "no objection to true liberty, except that it would make the nations free." Constantine was his next brother and heir to the throne. Divorcing his first wife, he had married in 1820 a Polish lady, Princess Lovicz, and two years later had handed to the Tsar a letter renouncing the throne on the ground that he possessed "neither the courage nor the capacity nor the strength needed by a ruler." When, however, the moment arrived, he paltered and hesitated, but eventually sent an unconditional renunciation to his next brother Nicholas, who thus became Tsar, without, I think, the hesitation alluded to in the letter below. There was an attempt at revolution in favour of Constantine upon the part of the so-called Decembrists, but this was quickly crushed by Nicholas.

Lord Wellesley, whose matrimonial affairs are referred to in the second of these letters, was, of course, the eldest brother of the Duke of Wellington. Since 1820 he had been Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. His first wife having died in 1816, he had recently married an American widow whom his biographer describes as wealthy, refined, and beautiful.

WHITEHALL,
January 4, 1826.

MY DARLING LOVE,

Your dear letter, which assures me you are better, has given me the greatest joy.

At the Cabinet yesterday there were only Lord Liverpool, Lord Henley, Canning, and I. We are to have another Cabinet to-morrow at 3. But I still do not despair of being with all that I hold dear on

Friday. Mr. Gregory has just been here. I asked him out of what arose the report of the Duke of York's death. He says that he cannot account for it, unless it be that the messenger who brought an account of Lord Arthur Paget's death, in consequence of a fall in hunting, passed by Belvoir on the day on which the Duke was said to have died. That messenger went on from London to Windsor to take the account to Lady Mount Charles; and Mr. Gregory supposes that talking of sudden death and passing by Belvoir gave rise to the report.

All seems still uncertain with respect to the succession to Alexander. When Constantine married the second time, as he did not marry a person of Royal Blood, he resigned the Throne for himself and the issue of his marriage, and his resignation was formally accepted and ratified by Alexander.

Constantine has remained at Warsaw since Alexander's death, and refuses now to become Emperor, having once resigned.

Nicholas is equally indisposed to become Emperor, and has taken the oath to Constantine. I have now told my own darling all my news. God bless you, and make us sensible of the happiness we enjoy in each other's true affection—and in the reward of such affection—our dear children.

Ever my own Love,
Your true and affectionate husband,
R. P.

WHITEHALL,
January 6, 1826.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

It is well I did not set out before the post this morning, as the post brought letters from Ireland which, though requiring a very short answer, would have called me back to town had I left it.

I need not tell you that there was not the slightest

foundation for the report of the Chancellor's death. I wanted very much to see him yesterday, and he had appointed 2 o'clock, saying he was in bed. I was so occupied that I could not go so far, and therefore I did not see him.

I had a letter from Goulburn this morning, with a terrible account of the feuds in Lord Wellesley's family. His letter is quite private. He says that a separation was very nearly taking place between Lord and Lady W. on account of Johnston; that Johnston after a very severe struggle has been quite triumphant; that Lady W. is very much to be pitied, and everything is in sad confusion, their family affairs being the exclusive topic of conversation in Dublin.

God bless you. I look forward to to-morrow with the greatest delight.

Believe me ever, my dearest Love,

Your most affectionate devoted husband,

R. P.

WHITEHALL,
Thursday evening, *January* 1826.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

I have been writing the whole of the day, and am now so thoroughly tired that nothing but that which is always a pleasure to me, the writing to my own Julia, could enable me to hold my pen.

I do hope my dear Bobby is quite right again. I sent you the medicines prepared by Fisher by the coach of to-day. I thought, perhaps, you would prefer them to any prepared at Brighton.

I still am not without hopes of coming to-morrow, but do not be uneasy if you do not see me. Since I left you I have had another letter from Ireland, and I must wait till after the post to-morrow. That perhaps may bring me one which may detain me here till Saturday morning. I shall not be detained beyond Saturday, if I am detained I will of course write.

Unless your letter of to-morrow morning gives me a continued good account of our dear boy I shall come to-morrow at any rate. The Cabinet is only just over.

God bless you, my Love, I have collected together some partridges *for you.*

Ever your own true husband,
R. P.

In the same month Peel pays a visit to the Duke of Wellington.

STRATHFIELDSAYE,
Monday, 6 o'clock, *January* 1826.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

To-day was a dull day to me as I could have no letter from my Julia. I arrived here in four hours after I parted from you, passing on the road Lord Hertford and Croker on their way. The party in the house was Sir John and Lady Shelley and a son, Mr. and Mrs. Arbuthnot and their eldest son, Lord Westmorland, Lady Georgiana Fane and Lord Burghersh, Lord Douro and Lord Charles Wellesley, the Duke's sons, and General Alava. To-day arrived Prince Esterhazy and I believe Count Villa Real. The house is a wretched one, wretchedly furnished, but warm and not uncomfortable. The drawing-room very small and very low, but a handsome library built, I suppose, by the Duke, with a billiard room only separated by columns from the library.

We had to-day some capital shooting. I shot more than anyone—12 rabbits, 16 hares, and 39 pheasants—67 head. My own Love told me to write her word what I killed.

The Duchess of Wellington said she was very sorry not to see you, and I believe her, for I am sure you would have preferred her company to that of the others who are here. Lady G. Fane I have long thought the most impertinent and odious woman in England.

Give Papa's Love and Blessing to all, but, above all, I send them to you, my own Julia—and ever believe me,

Your most affectionate and devoted husband,

R. P.

STRATHFIELDSAYE,
Tuesday, *January* 1826.

MY OWN DEAREST JULIA,

I have ordered my horses and shall be with you about 3 o'clock to-morrow. I wish that we were to dine together, but I fear that is impossible.

We had no arrival to-day and Lord Hertford went away this morning.

The shooting here has been better than at any place I ever saw. I killed to-day 28 pheasants, 21 hares, and 10 rabbits, and was again more successful than any other person. Your letter with so good an account of our dear Child put me in good spirits.

I shall reserve all I have to tell you for a *Coze*. I suppose Lawrence has not fixed another sitting for little Julia. Did you see the story in the paper about him and the Duke of Wellington?

I think with delight of seeing you to-morrow.

Ever, my own Love,

Your most attached and affectionate husband,

R. P.

The following two letters are addressed to Mrs. Peel, who had taken a house at the North Foreland. Sir Charles Long, referred to, was a politician of some note and a gardener of still more note, who was made a peer in this year 1826. His chief work had been to erect his once-famous house of Bromley Hill Place in Kent, and to lay out its extensive ornamental gardens.

Sir William Knighton, also referred to, was the

well-known physician who had been made Keeper of the Privy Purse by his friend the Prince Regent on his accession to the throne. The King used to address him as "Dearest Friend" and "most affectionately yours," and Knighton exercised a more than ministerial influence over the monarch. It was he who frustrated the attempt of Lady Conyngham to carry off the Crown jewels from Windsor. A skilful administrator and an honest man.

WHITEHALL,
August 18, 1826.

MY OWN DEAR LOVE,

Your letter to me which I got this morning gave me the only pleasure I have had since I left you. The absence of all those whom I wish to see on the state of the crops in Ireland keeps me in constant occupation, as I am obliged to write to them all instead of settling the business in conversation. Long, Lord Farnborough, I should say, was passing through town yesterday, and asked me to dine with him.

I fear the Duke of York is very dangerously ill. Do not, my sweet love, mention what I am about to tell you if you should see anyone. Sir H. Halford thinks that there is no chance of his recovery, and doubts whether he is likely to live more than six weeks. I fear there are symptoms of confirmed dropsy.

The moment I got to town I informed Sir Thomas Lawrence that I was come, had not heard from him, and begged he would postpone his visit until my return. I this morning got a note from him saying that he was going to Rugby, and should be with us the latter end of next week.

London is, I apprehend, at the very lowest point of the tide with regard to emptiness.

God bless you, my dearest Julia. I feel very lonely in occupying this great house without the loved Partner of my joys and sorrows and all my fortunes.

Give my love to the little ones.

Your truly affectionate husband,

R. P.

P.S.—I will faithfully execute your little commission.

August 19, 1826.

MY OWN LOVE,

I long to be with you again, for better reasons than the fresh cool air that you, I dare say, have in the Isle of Thanet. The heat here is quite oppressive, and the leaves on the trees in the front of our house are withering away for want of rain.

My letter to Huskisson determined him to come to town, and I am to meet him and Mr. Canning to-day at the Foreign Office. I am very sorry that Lord Liverpool is gone. This morning I had a long visit from Sir William Knighton, who came principally to satisfy me that everything had been done for the Duke of York that was possible in respect to money matters. I saw that he had not the least hopes of the Duke's recovery.

I had yesterday a letter from Lord Bathurst inviting us to Cirencester on the 25th of this month to meet the Duke of Wellington. I saw Sir Thomas Lawrence yesterday purposely to let him know that we should not remain at the North Foreland longer than Tuesday or Wednesday week.

It was very soon after I got your dear letter this morning that Sir W. Knighton called. I could scarcely help smiling when he said "So I hear you have been down into our country looking at a place." "Pray, what is your country?" I inquired. "Oh, Hampshire," he said, "you have been looking at

Stanstead Park." I could scarcely persuade him that I had never seen it.

We do not take so much interest in the rest of the world as it takes in our proceedings. Thank God, we want not Stanstead nor any other place to make us happy in ourselves and our children. God bless you and them.

Ever your own affectionate husband,

R. P.

The first of the four following letters, dated from Strathfieldsaye, describes the funeral of the Duke of York.

STRATHFIELDSAYE,
5 o'clock, Sunday evening, *January* 21, 1827.

MY OWN DEAREST, TENDEREST LOVE,

I have been sitting in my bedroom all the day, and now that it wants about an hour of the post time, take out my paper to write you a long letter.

The party here this morning was very small. Lord and Lady Salisbury, the Arbuthnots, the Duchess of Wellington and Lord Charles her son, Sir Henry Fane were the only persons at breakfast. I have since seen from the window of my room Sir John Shelley without his Lady and Lord Westmorland arrive.

Arbuthnot came to me this morning and told me that the Duke of Wellington had been taken very ill in the night, and he had sent off to London for his physician (Dr. Hume). Do not mention this, as I doubt whether the sending for Dr. Hume is generally known even in this house. The Duke is subject to these sudden attacks. He was quite well yesterday. But I must not forget the funeral. We, that is Huskisson, Beckett, Arbuthnot and I, got to Windsor without the slightest difficulty or stoppage, travelling at the usual rate. Nothing remarkable on the road

till we got to Windsor, except that the people returning on foot were rather more drunken than they are when returning from a fair. A short distance from the town of Windsor the military spectacle presented itself. The streets of the town, and about half-a-mile of the road before you reach the town were lined with the Horse Guards, Blues, and Foot-guards; a man and horse, or a foot soldier standing in line at the distance of about two yards from each other, every third man holding a torch not lighted, as we passed the horses of the cavalry, *mourning* at least as well as a great part of the human attendants in the ceremony.

We arrived at William Long's about six, waited some time for dinner. At length the whole of the *invited* party assembled. Lord Farnborough, Croker, the Duke of Wellington, Canning, his secretary Mr. Stapleton, Beckett, Huskisson, Arbuthnot, and myself. The room was small and the tables crowded. When we had been some time at dinner, a loud voice was heard in the passage, "Holloa, is this *Sir Charles Long's*? Is there any dinner going forward?" and Lord Westmorland, uninvited, presented himself, dressed as a Knight of the Garter quite contrary to the regulations. He consoled William Long for crowding his already over-crowded table by telling him he had brought his dinner with him, namely two pheasants, feathers and all.

About eight o'clock we began to inquire whether it was time to repair to the Chapel Royal. The Duke of Wellington said, like a soldier, "Let us go at the time we are ordered to go and then we cannot be in the wrong." We determined, however, to make inquiry, and were told that we were all wanted directly. We all repaired to the Chapter-Room. The hearse with the body had not arrived (it was then a little past eight). However, the heralds called our names and marshalled us in one of the aisles. At

the side of this aisle was a large folding-door closed, communicating by an internal passage with the exterior. Opposite this door the canopy was stationed, borne by six dukes. The canopy, supported by six slender poles, looked exactly like the top of a servant's bed without curtains, save that there were six instead of four. In this cold aisle, on the flags without a mat or piece of green baize to cover them, we all waited, the Dukes of Clarence, Sussex, and Gloucester among the rest, three-quarters of an hour, to the imminent danger, I should think, of old men like the Chancellor, just recovered from a fit of illness. He took my advice, and put his cocked hat under his feet, and stood on the silk which was put round it. Perhaps the Duke's illness, the Duke of Wellington, I mean, was caused by his standing in this cold aisle.

The Duke of Clarence did not act the part of Chief Mourner very decorously. He spoke to everyone very much as usual. I heard him inquire from Lord Hertford how many head of game he had killed at Sudburn. An odd question, considering that he was waiting in momentary expectation of his brother's corpse. Do not, my sweet love, repeat this.

At length, almost without being observed the folding door which I mentioned quietly opened. The coffin (of course borne by several strong men) was placed under the canopy, and the procession moved on. Now look at the plan on the opposite side, and you will understand the arrangement in the Cathedral. B is the centre aisle of the Cathedral. A is the aisle in which we were all arranged before the coffin came. C is the other aisle with common people in it. D the Chapel Royal opening under the organ loft to the centre aisle. E the vault where the funeral service was performed. X I mean to be the funeral procession, which moved along the dotted line. The circular spots B are the pillars which divide the aisles. Between the pillars soldiers were

stationed, every second man bearing a torch, or rather a wax candle, fitted into a long wooden handle of the thickness of the torch. The appearance of the soldiers would have been very good if you could have properly seen them, but that is all that was good. I never saw anything which so completely disappointed me. It was in no way, excepting the attendance of the soldiers, more impressive than the funeral of a private gentleman.

The whole church was so miserably cold that all comfort during the service was at an end. In the Chapel Royal, the place in which the service was read, there was almost complete darkness. There were little dirty, trumpery wooden contrivances, for I cannot call them chandeliers, hung from the lofty ceiling, each by a little chain, each holding three small wax candles. Not a single light either of gas or oil to light the enormous pile of building. William Long admitted that there was less light in the Chapel Royal than at a common evening service on Sunday. The service was read in the most unimpressive manner by the Dean. Nothing could be worse. I never heard it read so badly. The anthems were performed, I apprehend, by the common choristers of the chapel. They were sung neither better nor worse than on any other occasion.

There was nothing imposing in the mere procession itself, for no precise order was kept. We were all in black, and could not have been seen from want of sufficient light if we had been otherwise accoutred. The service was over in about an hour, and we left the church without any regular order, each as quickly as we could. Canning observed to me, and I am certain he was right, "Such a procession and such a ceremony, if offered at the theatre, would be hissed as contemptible." You lost nothing, my dearest love, by being absent. From the King's closet no part of the procession in the church could have been seen.

The organ loft was the place for a spectator who was indifferent to darkness and to the blast of every wind of heaven.

God bless you, my own Love, about whom are all my thoughts. I have written you so long a letter that I have hardly time to send my love and blessing to the children and to say once more to you

that I am unalterably your own

R.P.

STRATHFIELDSAYE,
January 22, 1827.

MY OWN DEAREST JULIA,

I have been very dull from having been a second day without a letter from you. It never happened before. I might have so arranged it that a coach or a messenger could have brought me one line written yesterday. It was my fault. I thought to-day that I was doomed to the repetition of my ill-luck about the weather. I never saw so unpromising a morning. Black clouds overhead with a driving snow. It became finer about half-past twelve, and we had two or three hours of very nice shooting. I killed 33 pheasants, 8 rabbits, 11 hares, and a partridge. Much more than anyone else.

Sir Charles and Lady Elizabeth Stuart came last night. I never saw such an object as she is, partly from the effect of cold which she cannot help, and partly from her strange dress, which she might.

Dr. Hume came to the Duke by express last night. He had a bad night, and was blooded this morning. Dr. Hume does not seem to think the attack a very alarming one. We have, of course, not seen the Duke, who is, I believe, in bed.

Sir John Shelley was attacked by a severe fit of the gout immediately on his arrival. I dare say he owes this to the cold aisle in which we were kept standing on Saturday night. Lady Shelley has been

confined to her bed for some time. She has never recovered the effects of a fall which she had about a year since on mounting her horse. I believe the spine was injured. Am I wrong in being very fearful about your own riding, my own love?

I came down, or rather left my room, for it is on the ground floor, earlier than the rest, and found the Duchess of Wellington alone in a small room near the breakfast room. Poor thing, she was as affected and uneasy about the Duke as if he had treated her with the kindness which is her due. I told her not to be alarmed, for that I thought the Duke before his attack was better than I had seen him for years. I said he was fuller and larger in his person. She said "That is the effect of age. People about his time of life get larger." I said his face was larger. She replied "I am so short-sighted I cannot remark his features, I can only judge by the colour, and when I look at *that precious face*, it seems to be very pale."

She burst out a-crying, and such things make me still more hate the sight of those who can find it in their heart, even if they have no sense of virtue, to usurp her place.

She seemed really to feel what she said to me yesterday "What a comfort I should have found Mrs. Peel to sit with me of a morning."

It really seems something to her to have me to talk to. What wickedness and what folly to undervalue and to be insensible to the affection of a wife! God bless you, my dearest love, and may He ever preserve us in the happiness we have enjoyed.

Your own affectionate husband,

R. P.

STRATHFIELDSAYE,
January 23, 1827.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I have very little news to send you. We have not yet seen the Duke. Dr. Hume still remains here.

He said this morning there is nothing alarming, but I cannot help wishing that the medicine would operate. Now for a little project which perhaps will end in nothing.

You said the other day that you like the sea at all seasons of the year, and that you wished that you could, even in winter, be at a nice house near the sea with every comfort about you. This made an impression on me at the time, and revived my former longing for a place of our own near the sea. Of all that I ever heard of, indeed of all that I can imagine, one was mentioned last night which, if we can afford it, would best suit us. I was sitting in a small room after dinner reading *John Bull* and in company with Sir Charles Stuart and Sir Henry Fane. They spoke of the death of Mr. Dent the banker. Stuart said "His marine villa is to be sold. Dr. McKinnon who married his daughter told me so, and wished me to purchase it." Both Sir Henry Fane who lives in the neighbourhood and Sir C. Stuart knew the place, and gave this description of it. It is in Hampshire, the house is like a very large cottage with every comfort, a great quantity of room, ample accommodation for the largest family. It was Mr. Dent's sole country residence. He therefore took great pride in it, built a beautiful drawing and dining-room in addition to the rooms which he found. The house was originally built as a marine villa by the former owner of Somerley. It stands on a high cliff, higher than the cliff at Ramsgate, but with easy access to the sea-shore. The height of the cliff makes the air very pure. The sea view of the Needles and the Isle of Wight is beautiful. The roads excellent. There is every advantage the Isle of Wight has, and the additional one of being on the mainland. The New Forest is quite within reach of a drive. Lymington and Southampton are the towns which can supply everything you want. Above all, the gardens have

been laid out with the greatest care. They told me positively that there was no footpath between the house and the sea. The whole place enclosed and private. I do assure you I stayed awake last night thinking of the happiness we should enjoy together in a place of this kind with our little ones and not an earwig to molest us. I asked Sir C. Stuart to write by this post to Colonel McKinnon, not to mention my name, but to inquire some further particulars as to price, etc. He will not probably hear from Colonel McKinnon before I leave this. Suppose a letter were to come on Thursday morning, that everything looked favourable, the price named not out of our reach, shall I go on from this to look at it, or shall I come back to town and will you go with me? I am here just as far on the road. The road passes through Hartford Bridge. I will go or not, just as you advise by your letter of to-morrow. Perhaps there may be no immediate haste for a decision. God bless you, my own love.

Ever your dearest,
R. P.

STRATHFIELDSAYE,
Wednesday evening, *January* 24, 1827.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

We have been some distance to shoot to-day, (six or seven miles) and I shall have time for no other letter than that which I write to my own Julia.

I return to you Mary's letter. I cannot conceive how the family of Mrs. Parke can mistake or affect to mistake the object of concealing her death from my father. Two years since we concealed from him the death of his own wife, where there was no similarity of complaint, and postponed telling him until his recovery. We actually went thirty miles to attend the funeral without his knowledge.

I am very glad that I resolved to take no notice of

the letter from my father. Nothing could be more imprudent for us than to irritate him. Let us therefore say nothing of it except to each other.

What will you think of what I wrote to you yesterday respecting Mr. Dent's place? I have been talking a great deal to Sir Henry Fane about it, and his account leads me to think that I did not give you too favourable a description. He says the air is purity itself, that it is not in every part of that coast you can find a high chalk cliff; that the fresh water is as pure as the air, and the sea view beautiful; the accommodation in the house very great, Dent having had ten children; the house very completely furnished. There is a billiard room, for instance; no neighbours, no village even very near. I am only afraid of the sum asked for the place being beyond our means. Suppose I am out of office, as I very likely shall be before the end of the Session, it would be a nice place for us to retire to; at all times we should probably reside there two months in the year.

I should go on building these castles in the air, if it were not for Farrance who requires my letter for the post.

I think, my own sweet, of returning to you in good time on Friday morning. One day more shooting will give me air and exercise enough, and God knows I have little pleasure in anything else when I am away from you. I cannot join in the evening amusements.

Ever your own true and affectionate husband,

R. P.

The Duke is better, but not yet visible.

The last letter of 1827 is from Mrs. Peel.

Wednesday, *December* 20, 1827.

My own dearest Robert,

Mr. Dawson has just left me and read a most excellent account of Sir Robert from an extract in

Mary's letter. There is no doubt of his perfect recovery.

It is said in the City that Mr. Robinson intends to resign and that Mr. Huskisson is to be appointed to his office. You have probably heard this report, but more probably quite disbelieve it. I would not have it so on any account—you will guess why.

Our little darlings have been unusually full of play and mischief and hid from me the £5 note, so that I can now account for the whole amount you sent me. You do not know how the doubt of my accuracy, or rather of my care, disturbs me. I took out this morning my Robbie, Freddie, and Willie. You never saw anything so wild as Sissy is. Pretty Sissy sends you this deer and lion.

What will, what must be, the inevitable fate of some of the Party when you are gone, if one can feel and speak of sorrow for such people? For them I dread that certain day of vengeance which their guilt must surely bring down upon them.

Dearest dearest love, believe me,
Ever your truly attached and most affectionate wife,
JULIA PEEL.

CHAPTER V

THE DISAPPROVAL OF A FATHER

WHAT was the meaning of those terms which, in the letter given at the close of the last chapter, Mrs. Peel had employed with reference to "some of the party"? Evidently, a disturbing or painful event had happened or was happening. This event, viewed from our strictly family standpoint, bade fair to be of no small domestic importance, in so far as it might threaten to create a divergence between Sir Robert, now approaching eighty years of age, and his eldest son. The ill wind blew from Ireland.

Nearly a generation had now passed away since our engagement to emancipate the Catholics. Throughout that period the Whigs had acted on the formula of Fox: "the Protestant Ascendancy has been compared to a garrison in Ireland. It is not in our power to add to the strength of this garrison, but I would convert the besiegers themselves into the garrison." But the Whigs were hopelessly few. However, as time went on, many of the ablest men in the Tory ranks, among them Canning, Castlereagh, and Wellesley, felt it right themselves to advocate Emancipation. Opposed to them was Peel, who, addressing Canning in 1827, could truly say of himself, "during the whole of my public career I have taken a very active and prominent part in opposition to the Catholic claims."

This deep divergence in the bosom of the old Tory party, though constantly composed under the mild sway of Lord Liverpool, suddenly started into full activity when, at the opening of 1827, he vanished from the scene of his prolonged authority, worn out by the troubles excited by this and other differences.

During the closing years of the Liverpool Government, the rank and file of the Tory party had had good reason to view the tendencies of the Government with acute and increasing alarm. Here was Huskisson, aided by Peel, advancing markedly in the direction of Free Trade. Here was Canning, in contradiction to the Castlereagh policy, recognising Republicanism in South America, sympathising with Hellenic aspirations, and ostentatiously active in defence of the liberties of Portugal. Here was a Cabinet coldly neutral upon the burning issue of Protestant Ascendancy and an endangered Church. But all these evil proclivities seemed to be summed up in Canning, who was currently branded as a traitor to the good old cause. Canning had now suddenly become Prime Minister!

From this newly formed Administration Peel now decided to stand aside, very reasonably refusing to serve under a statesman with whom he differed so essentially on the great domestic question of the day; and Canning, thus stripped of so much support, had to turn perforce to the Whigs. Thus omnipotent Toryism, with its overwhelming majorities in the Commons and the Lords alike, with King and Parliament equally opposed to Catholic Emancipation, viewed with natural indignation and amazement their treacherous Canning seated in office with Whig support. "They assailed the Minister night after

night with the most violent invective,"[1] so that Canning, worn out with the burden of this antagonism, died in August, in that room at Chiswick where Fox had died long ago.

He was succeeded by the transient and embarrassed phantom of Lord Goderich, who in his turn vanished at the opening of 1828.

After this violent perturbation it only remained for the Constitution to resume its normal course. A Tory majority legitimately implied a Tory Ministry, and accordingly this was now duly formed under Wellington and Peel. This was much to the satisfaction of the old man at Drayton, who writes to Mrs. Peel thanking his "dearest Julia," for her information. "He is the Minister of the people, a choice which does them infinite honour. Are the children made sensible of our good fortune? Kiss them for their grandpapa."

In the formation of the new Government, however, Peel found it necessary to labour, and laboured successfully, to reunite the Canningites to the Administration, and thus to patch up the mighty rift that had been torn in the old phalanx of Toryism.

WHITEHALL,
January 9, 1828.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I find no compensation whatever in the turmoil of the scenes to which I have been summoned, for the happiness which I left last night. Oh believe me, my own dearest life, that my heart is set upon home and not upon ambition. I had a melancholy journey, but did not suffer from cold.

I got here before 8. At 10 I was with the Duke, and found him most reasonable and friendly and

[1] Walpole, *History of England*, vol. ii, p. 452.

satisfactory in every way. He has written to Lord Melville to come to town; and Lord Bathurst, the Duke, Lord Lyndhurst, and I have had an interview this evening. We have of course done very little, but I think we are agreed entirely upon the course to be pursued, namely that there ought to be a strong Government in the House of Commons, and that it will not do to rely merely upon the violence of party spirit.

My view is to reunite the old Party, which was in existence when Lord Liverpool's calamity befell him. I cannot undertake the business in the House of Commons without more assistance than the mere Tory Party, as it is called, would afford me.

I am very glad to hear from William in the most decided terms that he never was connected with any newspaper, never wrote a line in one or forwarded a line.

No unfavourable impression has been made upon the King's mind by the falsehoods they have told him.

I have written to the whole party to put them off from the 13th, and in fact, as Parliament must meet on the 22nd of January, to put them off altogether. My present impression is that I shall have to call you and our little ones back to town, but I shall be able to say more decidedly to-morrow, and I will not fail to write again to-morrow. God bless you, my own Love.

Your own truest love,
R. P.

APSLEY HOUSE,
January 11, 1828.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I write this from the Duke of Wellington's, and while a discussion on important matters is going on. I must be very short therefore.

We have as yet determined nothing. Lord Bathurst came to town at three to-day; Goulburn came

to town last night. We dined at the Duke's yesterday, Lord Lyndhurst, Lord F. Somerset, Goulburn, and I. I am to dine there to-day. I suppose that Lady Shelley has left Apsley House; we heard nothing of her.

My own dearest, will you get the bills in? I do not think there is any chance of my being able to return to Maresfield. I will write to my own Love to-morrow. I am called away. Nothing at all is settled excepting that I think Goulburn must come into office and be in the Cabinet, and that we shall attempt to reunite the old Party that acted with Lord Liverpool as far as we can. God knows whether we shall succeed. God bless you, my dearest love,

Ever your own,

R. P.

APSLEY HOUSE,
January 12, 1828.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I write again to you from Apsley House in an interval of time that I can take from the perplexities in which we have been occupied for three or four hours. We have settled nothing; I do not suppose that those who were connected with us in Lord Liverpool's Government, Huskisson, C. Grant, etc., would object to act under the Duke of Wellington, I being head of the House of Commons, provided that a satisfactory arrangement could be made as to the distribution of offices; but, on the other hand, if we are to make a point of honour of taking in everyone who went out with us, there are not offices enough or nearly.

I am come to our own home since I wrote the above, heartily tired and with all my heart fixed far away from the objects to which I am obliged to attend. I did not leave the Duke's till 2 last night, and was up early. The Duke and I thought at first that some of our old friends might be disposed to

retire from age and a desire to relieve the Government from embarrassment. I fear this is not the case, and that all expect to come in again. I must say that nothing can be handsomer than the conduct of Lord Bathurst.

My own love, if this ends in nothing, I shall come for you. If a Government can be formed by us, I fear I cannot, for Parliament must meet on the 22nd, and conceive what a state we are in, now only ten days from the meeting! My present impression is that you may come with the little ones to join me here as soon as you can pay the *heavy* bills.

I have said that we would dine with the Duchess of Kent. Do pray come yourself with the baby in the close carriage. Do, for I am most anxious you should not catch cold. From walking the wet streets I have not escaped. My sweet, will you, before you go, send for Barnes, and tell him that I will settle with him about his son's attendance on me shooting? I wish Farrance would find out what Barnes expects about his son. He did live, I believe, with Sir John Shelley. What wages had he then? He is now older, and must have more. It is possible Barnes may have paid something which ought to be charged to my account and not Shelley's; Farrance can find this out. Tell Barnes he shall hear from me before I give up the place.

In another cover I have enclosed notes for £250.

I write in a very hurried way, but I am liable to constant interruptions. God bless you, and bless and preserve the little ones.

Ever your own truest love,

R. P.

WHITEHALL,
January 14, 1828.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I am most anxious to have you with me. It would be a great consolation to me to be enabled to

retire to you and our little ones from the odious perplexities in which I am involved.

Ever since I wrote the above sentence I have been called away, and I am now writing while the Chancellor, the Duke of Wellington, and Goulburn are talking in the room. Nothing is settled. My view was to return to my former office, and I apprehend there could have been no difficulty whatever as to the lead of the House of Commons. But I do not see our way. We are trying to reconcile former friends. You must not mind what Shaftesbury says.

My own love, come up as soon as you have settled the things, and travel in the close carriage. You would be a great comfort to me. I think you are quite right in leaving Farrance. God bless you,

Ever your

R. P.

This serious effort upon the part of Peel to reconstitute the old Tory party speedily proved of no avail. For the Canningites could not or would not mingle with their opposites, and retired from the Ministry in May 1828. That terrible Irish question! That mill-stone of Pitt's promise to emancipate the Catholics! This was the fourth Government in the space of a few months which it had disintegrated or destroyed!

Before proceeding further into the crisis, let me quote a few letters of social or family interest, including some from Sudburn.

WHITEHALL,
June 25, 1828.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

For the two last nights we have sat up in the House of Commons till 3 o'clock each night. I have seen no one, nor heard anything except on business since I quitted you.

Lord Farnborough has asked me to meet the Duchess of Clarence at Bromley Hill on the 12th for breakfast, or rather an early dinner. I told him that we had a Royal Duchess to dine with us on that day, and I doubted whether it would be possible for us to dine with him, at any rate unless his dinner was at a much earlier hour than it is likely to be.

We might go down there for three or four days when the House of Commons is up, and revisit our ancestral haunts in the neighbourhood of Mickleham.

What did Julia and Bobby say when they found that I had departed without them? I dare say they were heartily glad at not being disturbed.

I could not help laughing at Julia's position in the bed on the morning I left. She was lying with her head towards the bottom of the bed, and the rest of her body covered by the pillow.

Captain Laurin met me in Downing Street yesterday. He told me he was going to be married to a daughter of Lord Harrowby. The Duke had a fall from his horse in Bruton Street, but was not hurt, though a carriage passed close to his head as he lay on the ground. God bless you, my own Love, and give my love to the children.

Ever your own most affectionate husband,

R. P.

SUDBURN,
Monday, 10 o'clock, 1828.

MY OWN SWEETEST LOVE,

I am just arrived here and my first act is to write to you. I slept at Colchester last night, reaching it about 9, and set out this morning at 6. I have seen no one here yet. I heard that Huskisson and Mrs. Huskisson had preceded me on the road. I had a comfortless journey and really, at the first stage, had half a mind to return to you and those

dear little ones that I left acting Mustell and Weare. God bless little Julia, asking me who was there besides Hunt and Probert, in order that she might find an appropriate character for little Willy. Poor little fellow, he is but a bad representative of a murderer.

I shall hear from you to-morrow, and be assured, my own love, I will write to you every day, and that when I am absent from you all my thoughts are turned towards that happy home that God has blessed us with.

The people that I dare say are here know little of what such happiness is. My dearest love, your affectionate and devoted husband,

R. P.

SUDBURN,
Tuesday morning, 1828.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I have postponed writing to you this morning until after the post came in and brought me the letter, the receipt of which makes far the happiest moment in the day.

The shooting yesterday was excellent. The worst covers were beat, but they far exceeded anything I remember here, and every effort has evidently been made to astonish us.

The party here is what we heard it would be. I will tell you how it was occupied last night. There are three small rooms lighted, or rather four. One a billiard room, one the room in which the party breakfasts, and two other small rooms. In one of these there was a whist party consisting of the Duke of Wellington, Mrs. Arbuthnot, Lord Westmorland, Lady A. Beckett (who has become odious). The rest of the party played at some game of cards. I know not what, for I was not in the room, and Beckett and I played, or rather stayed, in the billiard room. Croker has something the matter with his head, and is very much oppressed with it.

By the by, Mr. and Mrs. Huskisson I believe were not of the card party. She is the only decent person here, seems not to like it, and I think they do not like her. Do not, my love, whisper to anyone ever the gossip I send you, and I will write to you just as I would speak. I see no signs of the influence of Mrs. A. having abated. She takes her place next to him at dinner as if it were a matter of course. The same with Lady Strachan and Lord H. But let us leave these odious things.

Kiss my own dear children for me. I am really tired of this place already, and enjoy nothing but the shooting. God bless you, my own darling, and with a heart full of affection to you, believe me your own love,

R. P.

To resume the political narrative of events, after the severe ordeal through which the Tory party had now won its way—passing from disgust at Lord Liverpool to detestation of Canning, thence to dismay at Goderich, and so onward to cruel doubt as to the patchwork Ministry of Wellington—after all this series of emotions, it was manna sent from heaven to have a Ministry at last composed in May 1828, whence the bad elements had been expurgated, a purified and homogeneous whole.

Yet now, at this very hour of supreme exultation, there befell, by some supreme irony of fortune, the last and most unpardonable blow of all. To the stupefaction of an outraged party, Church, and Monarch, Peel himself, the very champion of Protestant Ascendancy, goes over too! As early as August 1828 he had, in fact, written the fatal words to his colleague Wellington: "an attempt should be made by the Government to settle the Catholic

question—the settlement should be, if possible, a complete one." [1] On March 5, 1829, he himself introduced the Catholic Emancipation Bill into the House of Commons. The fact was that Revolution had raised its head in Ireland, and that, were nothing done, it would open its jaws to devour this, the last of all possible Ministries.

In this speech, as I am not concerned with its politics, I will only notice one sentence which has reference to the forfeiture of "private friendships and affections." What might these words imply?

In February 1829 Peel writes to explain his action very fully indeed to his father. Sir Robert replies from Drayton, affectionately, but with evident disapproval: "though in the country we see through a glass darkly, I have not lately been blind to the difficulties of your unhappy situation, and have found myself but ill able to avoid uneasiness. . . . I fear your last concession will only embolden resistance. . . . As a friend to the good old cause I trust the University will not dispense with a connection which you have ever considered as highly honourable." [2]

It may be noted that when on this change of policy Peel resigned his seat for Oxford, the University did dispense with the connection, and he was elected for Westbury.

Meanwhile William Cockburn, Dean of York, who was Peel's brother-in-law, having married his sister Elizabeth in 1805, was staying at Drayton, and communicates to Peel his father's state of mind. "He reads unfortunately nothing but violent papers, and his mind is not firm enough to despise the low ribaldry

[1] Memorandum dated August 11, 1828: *Memoirs of Peel*, vol. ii, p. 189.

[2] Cf. Parker, vol. ii, p. 93.

with which you are assailed." Things, however, began to clear: "Sir Robert and I have had many discussions on the subject, and I think that his disapprobation is mostly confined to an occasional jest."[1]

The Dean writes a little later to Peel that his full explanation in the House of Commons had produced a further favourable impression: "He interrupted me continually in the reading of your speech with those short ebullitions of pleasure with which he is accustomed to express his feelings. 'Robin's the lad after all.' 'No Administration can stand in this country without him.' 'The Duke could do nothing without him.' The speech served for our dessert, and it served Sir Robert also for comments during the whole evening. Between every deal of the long-lasting rubber, new commendations were poured forth upon the speech." The incident was finally closed by an affectionate letter written in March by the father to the son: "I am not inattentive to the agitations which distract the great community of the empire . . . let me persuade you to embrace the first opportunity of bringing dear Julia and the children to Drayton, and of reposing as long as possible in the bosom of peace."

The youngest son was born August 3, 1829. He was afterwards Speaker of the House of Commons from 1884 to 1895. He was named Arthur Wellesley, after his godfather the Duke of Wellington.

[1] Cf. Parker, vol. ii, p. 96.



ARTHUR WELLESLEY PEEL (YOUNGEST SON),

Speaker of the House of Commons and 1st Viscount Peel.

From a Water-colour Drawing by George Richmond, R.A., 1849

LONDON,
August 18, 1829.

MY DEAR MRS. PEEL,

I am highly flattered by your desire that I should stand Godfather for your son; and I will comply with it with the greatest satisfaction.

I am delighted to learn that you are so well; and I hope that we shall soon see you again.

Believe me,
Ever yours most sincerely,
WELLINGTON.

WALMER CASTLE,
August 23, 1829.

MY OWN DEAREST JULIA,

I received your dear letter this morning and I earnestly hope that the vaccination will succeed with that darling child.

It is a tremendous day, raining as hard as it can pour. I am writing to my own love in the little room which I had as a dressing-room when we were here together, and which is now my bedroom.

Lord and Lady Lyndhurst arrived last night, and Lord Chesterfield came from the Isle of Wight in his yacht—I suppose to see Mrs. Lane Fox who is here. Lord Fitzroy Somerset and Lord Worcester went away yesterday morning.

I rode with the Duke yesterday to Waldershare, Lord Guildford's, which is as gloomy as it was when we saw it. The Duke desires his kindest regards to you, and his best wishes to his Godson.

God bless you, my own dearest Julia,
Your own true love,
R. P.

STRATHFIELDSAYE,
September 3, 1829.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I am writing to you before breakfast and fear you will not get my letter till the day after to-morrow

unless the Duke should send a messenger to town. The Duchess was very sorry not to see you.

The only persons staying here when I arrived were Mr. and Mrs. Arbuthnot. There are expected here the Lyndhursts, Drummond and Algernon Greville, (the Duke's private secretaries), and the father of Algernon Greville and his wife. There is also a foreigner, a Prince d'Arenberg.

The road between this and Brighton is very beautiful. One stage, that between Guildford and Farnham, is nearly the most striking thing I ever saw. As soon as you leave Guildford you ascend a tolerably high hill, with very steep sides, and just space enough at the top of the hill for the road to pass over it. It goes along the top of the hill for eight miles. On one side you have the whole country to the Brighton Downs like a map before you, and on the other the whole country as far as London.

I do not think the Duke looks well, and he does not walk with the same firmness and elasticity with which he did.

He seems feeble, and drags one leg after the other as if he was weak.

He saw the King yesterday, and said he was in very good humour, still talking a good deal about Dawson, and very indignant. We have not yet opened upon our subject. I do not enjoy this place without you, and I should have wished to have been travelling with you that stage from Guildford to Farnham, in our britzsha or barouche.

Ever your affectionate husband,

R. P.

The following letter is from the Duchess of Kent. The future Queen Victoria, then ten years old, "sends her love" to little Julia, aged eight.

BROADSTAIRS,
September 6, 1829.

MY DEAR MRS. PEEL,

I regret that my absence from Town has deprived me of the means of hearing an account of you, during a late happy event. Pray let me now assure you of my solicitude, and that it will give me great pleasure to hear, when you can conveniently write, a good account of yourself and your child.

Victoria sends you her love and also to your little girl. And with my regards to Mr. Peel,

Always believe me,
My dear Mrs. Peel,
Your very sincere friend,
VICTORIA.

WHITEHALL GARDENS,
October 8, 1829.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

I have been all morning occupied about your cloak. I mean to give you one of my own choosing, and made to please my fancy. I do not like what they call merino cloth at the dressmakers'. It is exactly like the Cashmere cloth of which gentlemen's summer coats are made. It would not sit well and would not be warm enough. I have ordered Davis to make one, and have been having a long consultation with him about it.

We are to have another Cabinet to-day, and shall probably fill up the interval between this and Monday with Cabinets every day.

I have not seen a soul since I came to town except my colleagues. I have executed, I believe, all the commissions which my own love gave me.

Your own true husband,
R. P.

WHITEHALL,
October 9, 1829.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I punctually received both your dear and long letters, and, believe me, the reading of them is by far the greatest pleasure I have, while I am away from you. Nothing could be clearer than the important statement which you sent me in the postscript to your last. I shall not open my lips upon it, or write one word upon it to any human being until I see you, and have talked with you upon it. My own love, let matters remain just as they are until we meet. My father said something when I took leave of him about writing to me, and about a letter addressed to Whitehall reaching me. I thought he was going to write about something, but my impression was it was probably about the Currency Question. Whatever we may think, our first object must be not to make matters worse. But I can speak to you a thousand times better than write.

I have been so busy, not merely with Cabinets, but with my new Police, that I have not been out of my office until to-day when I walked up to Sir Thomas Lawrence's. He has painted out the handkerchief from Mr. Canning's hand, and I think greatly improved the picture, and has made a most beautiful head of Aberdeen for us. Lady Aberdeen desired to be most kindly remembered to you. She did not dine with us, but appeared after dinner.

I think we shall probably have Cabinets about the beginning or middle of November.

R. P.

October 10, 1829.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

Enclosed is a letter from little Julia herself. I should think it must have been returned to me from Drayton. Still, it removed, I think, all possible anxiety on her account.

I am as comfortable here in the little drawing-room as I can be in your absence. I find no difficulty as to dinner, as one or other of the Ministers who are in town has entertained the others. I dine again with Aberdeen to-day, and with Lord Rosslyn to-morrow.

I hope to set out early on Tuesday morning, and to be at Drayton that night. I have had Davis again about the cloak, for it is a pleasure to me to be busied about you when we are separated.

The housemaid is in great favour with me. She came this morning into the gallery, and said she hoped she might take the liberty of inquiring whether you were quite well, for she heard you got cold when travelling from Norfolk. By and by she came back and said "May I ask, Sir, whether the baby is quite well?"

I franked all your letters to-day to Stow, and I have the miniatures, which I will either lock up or bring with me to Drayton. Before I got your letter, I had sent to Evans' for the pamphlet respecting the loss of the *Kent*. I hope he may be able to get a copy of it. I will bring you a bitterer attack on Lady Morgan than Blackwood's.

I have been again busy all the morning about my Police. I think it is going on very well, the men look very smart, and a strong contrast to the old watchmen.

We sometimes complain of our movements being noticed by the newspapers, as you will see from the enclosed.

It is all quite true. I did stop as I was coming from Sir T. Lawrence's, and I did laugh, not at the caricature which is mentioned there, but at one called "Peeling a Charley" in which I am represented stripping one of the old watchmen of his great-coat, etc. God bless you, my own Love,

Ever your own true husband,

R. P.

MARESFIELD PARK,
1829.

MY DEAR DARLING MAMA,

I am so happy you and dear Papa is coming home so soon, brothers and myself are quite well and very happy, brothers and myself will like anething you pleese that is pretty. Thank you dear Mama.

Your most affectionate child,
JULIA PEEL.

Baby can say Mamma, Mam, Mam, Mam.

The following is an account of a visit to Lord Londonderry's seat at Wynyard:

WYNYARD,
Wednesday morning, 1830.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

I fulfil the promise which I made to you of giving you some account of Wynyard. I was 12 hours on the way from Drayton. The train was an hour late and I was detained at Darlington by the presentation of the address in the Town Hall. There was an immense assemblage of people and my reception was most cordial.

Finding Lord Somerton in the train on his way to Wynyard I took him to the Darlington ceremony and brought him home. There is an immense party here, but not exactly such a one as the newspapers mention. There were 42 persons at dinner yesterday. Among the company were the Duke and Duchess of Cleveland, very kind and cordial, Lord and Lady Belhaven, who had come on purpose from Scotland, Lord Hardinge, three frightful sisters of Lord Portarlington, Lord Somerton, etc. Lord Portarlington and Lady Aline seem as happy as possible. The house is still very unfurnished. The rooms,

entrance hall, and offices seem to be very much in the same state in which they were when Brunow was here. The bedrooms are large and very handsome. The hall is not finished, nor is the chief drawing-room papered. There is the Chapel hardly begun and a large conservatory not yet complete. I do not like the place or the country in which it is. The marriage is in the house at 6. The Archbishop of Canterbury made great difficulty in granting a special licence. The Bishop of Durham is to perform the ceremony. To-morrow we are to go to Seaham, 20 miles off. Everyone seems willing to decline the journey.

Ever affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

Sir Robert Peel died on May 3, 1830, and his son succeeded to the baronetcy and to Drayton Manor.

DRAYTON,
April 6, 1830.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

Mary and I arrived here last night about 12. On our getting here we had quite as favourable an account of my father as we could have expected.

We saw him this morning separately. He was a good deal affected when I went in to him, cried, and kissed me two or three times. He was very feeble, and his voice very faint, but he was sitting in his dressing-gown in his sitting-room upstairs. He had a tolerable night, sat up from about three o'clock till seven when he had some sleep. He is much thinner and feebler than when we were here in the autumn, but quite as well as could be expected after the severe attack of Saturday last. He seemed feverish, complained of thirst, and is constantly calling for something to drink, quite collected and not drowsy.

If he goes on well I think I shall go to town either

to-morrow or Thursday, and be with you as soon as I can. I have written to the coachman to-day desiring him to send the saddle-horses down to Brighton.

William, Jonathan, and John came down yesterday and slept at Coleshill. They are here now. The Hargreaves are just arrived. God bless you, my own love, and keep our children.

R. P.

WHITEHALL,
April 18, 1830.

MY DEAR MAMA,

I hope you got to Drayton quite safe, and that you and dear Papa are quite well and Freddie and Willie, and will you please tell me whether Grandpapa is quite well? O! and dear Mama, I have got only one thing more to tell you and that is I liked my fowl very much, and I hope Freddie and Willie are not tiresome.

I remain,
Your affectionate daughter,
JULIA PEEL.

Master John continues much the same as when you left him.

(*Sgd.*) H. ROBERTS.

Little Sissy's letter to her grandpapa on her birthday when she was 9 *years old,* 30*th April,* 1830. *He received this letter* 4 *days before his death. He died on Monday, the* 3*rd May,* 1830, 80 *years old.*

(Above in Lady Peel's handwriting)

WHITEHALL,
April 30, 1830.

MY DEAR GRANDPAPA,

It is my birthday to-day, and Mr. Tomlinson has given me a Greek and Latin Testament, because

I finished reading the Gospel of St. John in Greek and Latin before I was 9 years old, and he has given me leave to tell you that I get on very well indeed.

I am very sorry you have been ill, but I hope you will be quite well when we come to see you again. We all send our very best love to you.

Your affectionate grand-daughter,

JULIA PEEL.

DRAYTON,
May 4, 1830.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

You will no doubt before this reaches you have heard the sad intelligence that met us on arrival here last night about 12.

My father died at half-past 5 yesterday. He had dozed for three hours before his death in his arm-chair, and the loss of life could not be ascertained by any external appearances, and nothing could be more tranquil and more quiet than he was.

Mr. and Mrs. Hargreaves are here, but I hope they will go in the course of the day. I have not yet settled about my return, as the painful arrangements for the funeral, etc., must be made. God bless you, my own love,

Ever most faithfully and affectionately yours,

R. P.

DRAYTON MANOR,
May 12, 1830.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

Everything here appears satisfactory and my father's intentions have been fulfilled by his will. It is quite as favourable to us as I expected—in fact it is exactly what I understood it to be.

The messenger came in the middle of last night. I took for granted the King was no more, and the accounts I hear are very unfavourable.

I have been going through the affecting duty of

collecting all my father's private letters. We burnt them all without looking through any of those from the family. Bobbie is gone under the charge of Mary to dine with his cousins at Bonehill. I have given her special directions about him. He has been playing on the pleasure grounds all the morning and is perfectly well. Enclosed is a letter from him to Julia.

I send you also, and beg you will keep it as a memorandum for us, the letter that Julia wrote my father on her birthday.

God bless you, my own love,
Your most affectionate,
R. PEEL.

DRAYTON,
Tuesday, 4 o'clock, May 12, 1830.

MY OWN DEAREST JULIA,

I have postponed writing to you until all the painful ceremonies were over, and I have now hardly time to do more by this post than to send you a single line.

There was an immense concourse of people at the funeral. The whole Corporation of Tamworth attended, sixty tenants on horseback. Everything was conducted in the most orderly manner. It was a most affecting and impressive ceremony.

We have just this moment concluded reading the will. We, the sons, and sons-in-law, met in the library. Mr. Willington read the will. The provisions of it were just what I expected them to be.

Bobby is quite well, and behaved very well indeed. I will take great care of him. Tell Venables to send my letters, etc., by the post of to-morrow evening.

Ever most affectionately your own love,
R. P.

George IV died on June 26, 1830. The monarch referred to in the following letter is therefore William IV:

WHITEHALL,
August 25, 1830.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

We have had a Council to-day, from which I am just returned. His Majesty looked very well and was very gracious. He made many inquiries after you, having heard that you had not been well.

General Baudrand, the bearer of a letter from the King of the French, was at the Council and had an audience of the King. The Duke of Wellington said to me of his own accord, "I shall come to you after I return from Liverpool." He said he had fixed to dine at Manchester on the 20th, and that he should come on to Drayton afterwards.

To-day we have a great dinner at the City, given by the East India Company to Lord Clare.

God bless you, my own love, and give a father's blessing to the children.

Ever your own true and affectionate husband,
ROBERT PEEL.

The following letters refer to the death of Huskisson:

September 25, 1830.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I am just returned safe from Manchester, but alas, after witnessing a most lamentable accident to one of our party, poor Huskisson. About half-way between Liverpool and Manchester our car stopped to take in water. Six or seven gentlemen got out. There was a sudden cry that an engine was approaching, the others saved themselves, but Huskisson either fell or was thrown down, and the wheel of the engine passed over the upper part of his thigh, dreadfully lacerating and breaking the bone. When we last heard of him he was not in a state to suffer amputation, and I fear there is no hope of his being

able. *This was the single accident.* Mrs. Huskisson saw the whole.

My dearest love,
Ever most affectionately yours,
R. P.

LIVERPOOL,
September 26, 1830.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

Huskisson died last night about half-past 9. Everything intended here is given up in consequence. I shall return to my own love to-morrow. I suppose I cannot leave this till near 11. I may therefore be very late before I arrive. I may stop at Wolseley Bridge to sleep, if it is an unreasonably late hour for arrival, and if I am detained for horses as I probably shall be.

General Yates is in the room with me.

You can hardly conceive the sensation made by the lamentable and most singular fatality of yesterday.

Ever your own dearest love, my own Julia,
R. P.

The Wellington Ministry was now drawing to a close. But one of its achievements was Peel's establishment of the Metropolitan Police. It had never really recovered from the dissatisfaction caused to its Tory supporters by its having passed Catholic Emancipation. "The ultra Tories had never forgiven Wellington and Peel for emancipating the Roman Catholics. . . . Peel especially was hated with a hatred which almost exceeds belief."[1] In those days the demise of the Sovereign entailed a General Election. At the July General Election the Peel family suffered severely, two brothers and a brother-

[1] Walpole, *History of England*, vol. ii, p. 605; Brougham, vol. iii, p. 11.

in-law, Dawson, being beaten. Thus the Wellington Ministry tottered, and when the Duke announced in November that the British Constitution was fairly perfect, that was the *coup de grâce.*

October 4, 1830.

MY OWN DEAR LOVE,

I have got your dear letters written on Saturday and Sunday.

To-day I am going to town with Aberdeen. Our party is to be he and I and Goulburn. London seems quite deserted, at least I did not meet a soul in the course of my visits yesterday to the Duke of Cambridge and Talleyrand.

I have had a letter from Mr. Porter of Liverpool stating that there had been a meeting, and that a requisition was preparing calling me to stand as a candidate for Liverpool. As my resolution is fixed not to stand in any event, and as there would be great awkwardness in their encouraging an offer to be made to me which I meant to decline, I have written to them stating that I have no leisure to perform the duties of member for Liverpool and therefore at once notifying my intention to decline the honour.

Ever your, my own love,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
October 5, 1830.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

I am sitting in the library with Aberdeen's portrait before me, which certainly is the finest portrait in the world, the window open—a good fire—and preparations going on above stairs for our occupation. Smith is rubbing the pictures, which were very much chilled, and they are sending home our pictures from the Exhibition of Sir Thomas Lawrence. We have a Cabinet to-day and a Council

at St. James's to-morrow. Perhaps I shall awake you with a kiss on Thursday morning if you are very sleepy.

I keep my letter open and am writing at intervals between the insistent visits that are paid to me on some business or other. I am very glad that you have arranged that Tomlinson should dine with the children. I hope this arrangement will continue when we leave Drayton. It is the best on every account, as it will prevent two separate dinners and will keep the children in some little order at dinner, just the time when the vulgarity of servants does the most harm.

Another knock! So here I must close.

Ever your own,
ROBERT PEEL.

November 1830.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I long to get to town to you and to escape the insistent torments of business. I am quite bewildered.

There are knocks—knocks—knocks of hungry candidates "for some small appointment," I have no doubt. I was waylaid by half a dozen as I went to the office.

Ever your own true love,
R. P.

CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL LIFE OUT OF OFFICE

On the fall of the Government of the Duke of Wellington in November 1830, Sir Robert took his seat for the first time in his life on the Opposition bench.

It would be far beyond our present purpose to furnish a narrative of the political events which followed upon the accession of the Whig Government to power. Suffice it to say that, after another General Election in 1831, the Reform Bill was carried into law in 1832, being necessarily followed by yet another General Election in that year. Peel had become one of the members for Tamworth in succession to his father, and retained the seat throughout these contests. It may be mentioned that in May 1832 he declined an offer of the Premiership, made to him in consequence of the embarrassments of the Government. Finally at the opening of 1833 he took his seat in the House of Commons, as leader of a band of only 150 followers, the remnant of that Tory party which had passed from the scene of its long ascendancy.

For the children these were the years bringing the phase of school. Here is a picture of school—from a parent's point of view. Did "Bobby" think it all so "perfect"?

BRIGHTON,
Sunday, 1831.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

The whole arrangement respecting our Boy is quite perfect.

He preferred sleeping at Dr. Everard's last night, saying that the sooner he became acquainted with the boys the better. I took him therefore at 6 o'clock after he had had his dinner, and found Dr. and Mrs. Everard at home. I saw Bobby's bed and room and all the other rooms in the house. Each room has four beds in it, a bed for each boy. Bobby sleeps in the same room with Aberdeen's son, and the two Lady Russell's and the Duke of Bedford's sons.

He was given in charge to little Bentinck, Lady Frederick's son, a much less boy than himself, who was to introduce him to the other boys, all of whom I saw and who made his acquaintance.

Nothing can be more perfect than the whole school or better behaved than the boys, who seemed all to have the greatest attachment to Dr. and Mrs. Everard.

Mrs. Everard brought Bobby to Church this morning and I met him there. Bobby desires I would let you know that he must have a jacket, for all the boys tell him that the skirts of his coat will be torn off when he is either a fox or hound.

Ever my dearest love,
Most truly and affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

A General Election held in 1831 went off satisfactorily at Tamworth.

DRAYTON MANOR,
April 29, 1831.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

Nothing could be more perfectly satisfactory in every respect than my visit to Tamworth yesterday.

There was a very large assemblage of the principal persons of the town to meet me at breakfast, and to accompany me on the Canvass. The town was perfectly quiet, just exactly as if nothing was going on —and everyone I asked for their vote promised it to me.

We go on with the Canvass to-day and I have no doubt that the same will be the result.

The friends of Lord Charles Townshend were pleased that there was no attempt to disturb him.

Your own true love,
ROB. PEEL.

DRAYTON MANOR,
May 2, 1831.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

This frank will announce to you that the election is over, and that I am again returned for Tamworth.

Everything passed off as well as possible—a great attendance of my friends and perfect tranquillity in town, though there was a large concourse of people (all friendly). No Attwoods; no speaking of any kind, except the Candidates, their movers, and seconders, so that everything passed just as we could have wished. Our friends very zealous and very decided in case there had been any attempt at disturbance from any quarter.

Ever your own true love,
ROBERT PEEL.

The next letter deals with a subject big with eventual fate.

The French Revolution of July 1830, which overthrew Charles X and set Louis Philippe on the throne, had its repercussion in what was then the kingdom of the Netherlands. This kingdom, consisting of Belgium and Holland, had been created by the Great

Powers in 1814, but in 1830 a revolution broke out in Belgium against this connection. In February 1831 the Belgians threw over King William of the Netherlands and elected the Duc de Nemours, the second son of Louis Philippe. Naturally France was pleased. Not so the Powers. Their fear was France; and accordingly Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg was substituted by their influence and entered Brussels in July 1831. A sage and discreet prince, favoured by us from our recollection of his marriage to Princess Charlotte, the short-lived heiress to the British throne.

Meanwhile Holland was in no yielding mood, and the Prince of Orange crossed the Belgian frontier on August 2. Blow now followed blow. The French followed his example, invaded Belgium and advanced towards Louvain. At this point Sir Robert writes his letter. Three days later the Dutch recrossed the frontier and their retreat was speedily followed by that of the French. This, however, by no means ended matters, for King William declined to accept the ensuing settlement of the Powers. Coercion had to be used and then diplomacy, so that it was not till 1839 that the kingdom of Belgium at last took its place, under the guarantee of the five Great Powers, as a neutral State in the European family of nations.

WHITEHALL,
August 17, 1831.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

You will see a speech made by Soult in the French Chamber of Deputies which has caused much alarm here. He says the French Troops will remain in Belgium notwithstanding the retirement of the Dutch Troops. The Ministers looked very uneasy last night in the House of Commons. There was a

vague report, which I most heartily hope may be true, that Lord Milton meant to propose an adjournment of two months, when the adjournment for the Coronation shall take place.

God bless you, my own love, my heart and thoughts are with you at Drayton,

Your own affectionate husband,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
August 19, 1831.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

We had a late House last night. I did not get home until half-past 2, and I am now going to Charles Street. I do feel most severely this unusual and unnatural separation from my own love.

Alice wants to see you to ask you to be Godmother to her little girl. I hope it will be called "Julia," as I like the name to be perpetuated in the family.

Yesterday I paid a visit to Sir A. C. Grant. I found him suffering from influenza but evidently in a great fuss about something else. He was sitting in his dining-room, the folding doors open and both rooms set out in the smartest order. He had all the appearance of sitting for company.

At length he said that in a few minutes he expected Lord Howden, who was about to treat for his house, that he had asked £30,000 for house, furniture, and stables, and that Lord Howden had offered £25,000, not for himself, but for a friend.

After various shrewd guesses and inquiries the Chin discovered that this friend was Lord Goderich.

At the appointed time Lord Howden made his appearance and I took my departure. The Chin was very much disposed to accept the offer, and I have little doubt that he did so.

Aberdeen and he have both suffered severely from decided English cholera.

I told Lord Jersey that I would dine at Osterley on Saturday, and on Sunday I think I shall go down to Sir James Scarlett's and dine and sleep there.

We beat the Government last night on a clause in the Reform Bill on a Motion made by Lord Chandos.

God bless you, my dearest Julia, and give to all the children their father's love and blessing.

From your own true love,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
August 20, 1831.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

We sat till past 2 last night and are to meet again to-day, Saturday, at 12. It is really too much, and many persons are suffering very severely in their health. Lord John Russell came down to the House yesterday for a few minutes the picture of death, but was obliged to leave the House. I saw Aberdeen yesterday, and never saw one so much altered by illness. His is a complete case of English cholera.

I am sorry that you should think it possible that I could—particularly when I am separated from you—have an angry feeling towards you on account of anything you have written or could write about Bobby. I shall certainly write to Dr. Everard, and I feel quite satisfied that you will do everything you can to encourage Bob to profit by Mr. Everard's instructions.

Last night was very stormy here, and I see the tide is coming in with great force on account of the east wind.

I hope that the late rains have improved the plantations of Drayton. I cannot mention that name without bitterly lamenting that I am away from all that I hold dear.

I am just going to that infernal place which I left last night, heartily wishing that I might never enter it again.

The boat for the Pool is finished and I will send it down by the Canal.

Believe me,

Most affectionately your own devoted husband,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
August 22, 1831.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

Sir Henry Hardinge and I went to dine yesterday at Sir James Scarlett's. We slept there and came back this morning. I cannot say that I admire the place much. It is just opposite Evelyn's place, Wootton, and looks upon the woods of it. Sir Matthew Ridley was there with two sons of Scarlett, and the party was dull enough.

We passed through Mickleham, by the gates of the first house we called our own. I looked for every spot where we had been together and thought with double pain of my absence from you.

I have hinted to the Committee that I cannot go on staying here to fight the tedious battle, and that they must choose some other leader if the House is to go on sitting much longer.

Your most truly affectionate husband,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
August 23, 1831.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I was determined last night to put a Question to Lord Althorp as to the intentions of the Government with regard to the adjournment of the House.

I did put my Question and got a very unsatisfactory answer, namely that the Government did not mean to adjourn for the Coronation, at least for not more than a single day on which the Coronation takes place.

It is really too bad, for the House has now been

sitting, with very short intervals, since the 26th October last.

I went this morning to Charles Street and told the persons assembled there that I could not undertake to continue in town—that in my opinion there is very little use in protracting the debates on the Reform Bill from night to night, and that I could not undertake to remain here to conduct the battle.

I found several people, such as Lord Chandos, Sir C. Wetherell, and Lord Stormont, dissatisfied with this and prepared to go on interminably on the present system. Others were disposed to agree with me and seemed anxious to bring the business to a close.

We parted not in very good humour. I said I should stay a few days longer, and would then go into the country, and come back for the Third Reading of the Bill, but that if their view was to continue debating the Bill in the same way much longer, they must make some arrangements to dispense with my attendance.

I find the house so very dull and mournful without you that I cannot bear it.

There has been a quarrel in the Cabinet between the Duke of Richmond and Mr. Stanley. The latter complained of the interference of Lord Anglesey at the last Dublin Election, after assurance was given to Stanley that there should be none. The Duke of Richmond defended Lord Anglesey and high words ensued. Both tendered their resignations, but there has been a sort of reconciliation, I believe.

Everyone is waiting with the greatest anxiety for the unravelling of the mystery of foreign politics. The great point upon which the Peace of Europe turns at present is the evacuation of Belgium by the French Troops.

I was in the Lords for a few minutes last night. Lord Grey spoke and looked very despondently and

talked of the pleasure he should have in relinquishing office.

God bless you, my own love,

Ever your affectionate husband,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
August 24, 1831.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I cannot much longer bear this separation from you, I get a sort of lassitude and languor here which quite depresses me. The coming home at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning to a desolate house with the prospect of the same thing the next night, the bedroom with your tables and glass, and all the outward marks of habitation, the lonely nursery and the drawing-rooms all silent and unoccupied—are sometimes too much for me.

My chief pleasure is to do something connected with Drayton. Mr. Rawlings has just been here with the branch candlestick, which appeared to me very handsome, but I wish you could see it. It is one of a pair, standing high, old-fashioned pattern and four lights.

Tell little Julia that I have got her watch at home, and that I will wind it up every night and see how it goes.

Ever your most affectionate husband,

ROBERT PEEL.

Mrs. Long Wellesley, referred to in the next letter, had married the nephew of the Duke of Wellington in 1828. He is commemorated in "Rejected Addresses" in the line "Long may Long Tilney Wellesley Long Pole live."

WHITEHALL,
August 25, 1831.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

I have told everyone that I can stay here no longer than a very few days, that I must go to join you and abandon the Bill to its fate, except that I will come back for the Third Reading.

I have been sitting all the morning to Chantrey, and I shall sit there again on Saturday, I hope for the last time.

My dearest love, I hope you will speak to the coachman about the exercise of your horse and the feeding of it. He has been accustomed to very little corn, and his appearance is of much less consequence than his perfect safety. I am always a great coward about your riding, a great one when I am with you, but a greater when I am absent.

I have just been ordering my solitary dinner and feel so dull. In the course of the day I generally call on Aberdeen or the Duke of Wellington. I called on the latter as I came from Chantrey's. Mrs. Long Wellesley was waiting to have an interview with him on their family affairs. Her husband has delivered up her daughter and now makes his appearance in the House of Commons. When you mention the house in your letters I look at the model and fancy the progress that is made in it.

God bless you, and believe me

your affectionate husband,

ROBERT PEEL.

"Johnny" referred to in the next letter was the fourth son, born May 24, 1827. The picture is by Partridge and is reproduced.

WHITEHALL,
August 29, 1831.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

I will execute the commissions you have given me and will myself put up Johnny's picture.

Dawson has had a very unpleasant affair with Mr. Grattan, arising out of a debate in the House on Friday last. Holmes acted as Dawson's friend and contrived to settle the matter without a Duel. I much feared that there would be great difficulty in doing this. What a shocking thing it would have been if he had lost his life, or had been seriously wounded before he had seen Mary and his children after his return from Ireland! I hope this affair will be a serious warning to him. It was more than probable that this would happen after his speech at Harwich. Without the slightest necessity he volunteered on Friday last to get up in the House of Commons and charge twenty Irishmen as hot-headed and as passionate as himself with being a Cabal, a set of men who intended to brow-beat the Government and so on.

This induced one of the party—Grattan—to call out that this was false. The hot weather and the debates make people very impatient and quarrelsome. Goulburn had a very unpleasant affair a few days since with Duncombe.

I shall feel the utmost pleasure in returning to more peaceful scenes and to me much more happy ones.

Ever your affectionate husband,

ROBERT PEEL.

Lady Peel writes from Norris Castle in the Isle of Wight, which they had rented. Alice referred to below is Lady Alice, the wife of Jonathan Peel. Mr. Faithful's was the then famous preparatory school at which the younger sons were educated. The little boy was Archibald, so charmingly commemorated in the *Recollections* of Lady Georgiana Peel.

NORRIS CASTLE,
Friday, 1831.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

Yesterday I went in the phaeton, as Charles said that the chariot was too heavy for our horses, to call upon the Croker family, a beautiful drive, but awfully hilly. It was nearly 9 when we got back. I never take a servant as we pack in so many children! You must know that the horse which is driven almost endangers our lives. Whenever I go in the phaeton it is dreadful; plunging, rearing, rushing off, and generally at the most critical places.

I found all the Croker family just coming in from their vessel, a short distance from their wild desolate shore. They appeared greatly pleased with my calling, particularly Mr. Croker.

Their small tiny house is actually over the water. I have all sorts of civilities offered me from everybody. Lady Clinton and I had gone a good way towards a mutual friendship.

She is a very superior person, I think.

Then this morning, before I was up, she wrote me a note to say they were unexpectedly going away.

Bob has got home his *tail* coat. You would not know him: he looks like 20 in it. I have written to you every day, my own love. I have just had a request to patronise a ball on this side of Cowes as well as to attend one on the other side, but I prefer seeing the *waves* dance. What a very happy sail we had the morning you left this. I hope you enjoy your shooting in Derbyshire.

Dearest Robert, believe me,
Always your own affectionate
JULIA PEEL.

BUCKENHAM, NEAR BRANDON,
December 31, 1832.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I got here yesterday after a most tedious journey of two days—the first a cold train from the

time I left Drayton Manor, the second over The Fens, which looked lonely and disconsolate enough.

I found a very small party here—Mr. Pollock and his son, the Duke of Rutland, Capt. Rouse, and Count Waleski. The party is still further diminished by the departure of the Duke of Rutland, who left early this morning.

I have seen Alice's little boy. He looks very pretty in his blue jacket and white trousers. He is going to Mr. Faithful's almost immediately. He is seven years of age, but seemed to me almost a shrimp compared with Willie.

Ever your own affectionate

ROBERT PEEL.

The following letters record visits to Lord Westmorland at Apthorpe, and to the Duke of Rutland at Belvoir:

APTHORPE,
January 10, 1833.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

There is no shooting to-day, for it is the most wretched day here I ever saw. Eyes never beheld a place so little calculated as this for confinement to the house. How I wish you were here, above all that we might be together, but partly that you might see such a specimen of a country house. The house is exactly like a small college in Oxford. It is a building about 200 years old, built round a tolerably sized quadrangle which is large enough to be entirely of grass, a little field. Its equal in discomfort cannot be produced. Lord W. told me that I had an excellent apartment full of comforts for my bedroom. To go from it to bed last night from the drawing-room I had to pass first through an old room of tapestry which was fitted up as a bedroom for King James 1st, and remains just as it was, the same

table, the same looking-glass (ebony and silver) that were provided for the King being now in it. The bed is taken down. The bed-curtains made into window-curtains and a billiard table substituted for the bed. This was the first room I passed through. The second was a sort of morning room, with nothing particular in it. The window shutters and other parts of the room repaired with wood which has never been painted since it was put up, common deal. The third room was a long gallery, 115 feet long, that is, just about twice the length of ours. Low, but rather a handsome room, without a single fire in it, and with windows certainly not excluding the air of heaven.

Having paced through the whole of this, I came to another room, on opening the door of which my candle was blown out, and I felt my way back as well as I could through the gallery, in which there was no light whatever, to procure one. Having returned with my light, I came to the fourth room, a large deserted library, with all the books in confusion, something like the library at Lulworth, but a larger room. No fire in this. Then came a long passage. Then came my bedroom, a room with family portraits, very dark by day, looking into the quadrangle. There are four doors open into the room, two of them into passages and staircases that lead I know not where. Another into a long sort of closet that has been cut out of the thickness of the wall, and seems occupied at present by nothing but spiders and rats.

My own love, I thought of you in the middle of the night, and how frightened you would be at the frolics of the rats in this long closet which goes round at the head of the bed.

I must tell you, though, that after dinner I was playing at billiards with Lord Westmorland, at least I had taken refuge in the billiard room from a

large family party of Fanes, all of whom were seated round two whist tables in the drawing-room. Croker and Lord Westmorland were playing. Lord Westmorland took us out of this room into another, which had been prepared for and occupied by the present King, when Prince of Wales, the bed being surmounted at the corners by the tail feathers of dunghill cocks, out of compliment to the Prince, whose device as Prince of Wales was three ostrich feathers.

While in this room, which is the bedroom of some of the guests, Lord Westmorland espied a very large and comfortable fire, upon which he observed that in so stormy a night most of the rooms in the house would smoke if the fires were heaped too high with coals.

Upon this he ordered both the housemaid and the housekeeper to be sent into an adjoining room, and cautioned them against the danger of large fires. Conceive my horror after I had felt my way for a quarter of a mile through cold blowy galleries and passages to find, when I came to bed at 12 o'clock, how Lord Westmorland's order had been executed in my room. The moment I opened the door out went the candle again, and well it might, for both the windows were wide open, and not a coal live or dead left in the grate, every one having been carefully raked out either on the hearth or on the floor.

Now, have not I turned this wet day to some advantage and written you a long letter? I do believe it will amuse you, and if it does I will write you another of the same kind, for I have not half done.

I have to describe to you the party, and above all a clergyman, a Dr. Bunney, who performs all the duties of the Groom of the Chambers, and some of those of the housemaid. His civility in showing little conveniences to the guests is amazing.

The family party is capital. All but Croker and

I are relations. Fanes and Chaplins, with a gruff general of the name of Fisher. I was going on, but I must stop and reserve something for another letter. Oh, how I wish you were sitting here with me, that is, in my bedroom, that we might explore together some of the passages and closets. God bless you, and give to each of the little ones the love of their father who dotes on them next to you. Do not, my own love, mention my account of this to anyone. The world is so full of Paul Prys who repeat all they hear.

Ever your own affectionate husband,

R. P.

APTHORPE,
Thursday, half-past 5, 1833.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

The shooting was exceedingly bad. The attempt of the whole day was to prevent us from killing the very little game there was to kill. The party consists, as I said in my last letter, of relations, with the exception of Croker and myself. Count Ludolph arrived yesterday, but seemed bitterly to repent of his journey, after the chasse of to-day was over.

There is an old Mrs. Fane here, the mother of three enormous sons. who are here, also Sir Henry Fane, whom you know, the vulgarest clergyman who was ever seen, and a pert lawyer. Mrs. Chaplin is here with her husband, who is a Lincolnshire farmer, and Member for the county. She is a sister of the three brothers. An old sour-looking general, of the name of Fisher, with his wife, are here also. Who they are I know not. Lord and Lady Barnard make up the party. He is a son of Lord Darlington, and a relation of the family. Lady G. Fane is confined to her own room, and I fancy sees no one. The least exertion of speaking brings on some complaint in the chest. I am afraid the whole family party came here to enjoy themselves in the

company of each other, and look upon us as interlopers. They all sit down, eight of them, to play at whist at two tables, without even proposing to anyone else to play. But they could not be better occupied. The whole establishment is the most consistent one that can be imagined. Everything is perfectly well assorted; the party; the shooting; the stables; the kitchen; the bedrooms; the louts that are called game-keepers; the 20 spaniels, each with a muzzle on that it may not eat the game, and with one foreleg tied up to its neck that it may not run too fast. Above all, the dinner!!! Conceive as a side dish two infant pigs on one dish, two untimely beasts just born, the feet being cut off, and offered as a sacrifice in the corresponding side dish. Conceive my being surprised into the eating of a side dish which I found to be composed of pickled herring and apples!

Does our dear home spoil me for anything else, or is this place such an one as I describe it to you? I should not want its discomfort to make me long to be back again with you. I really had serious thoughts of sending for post-horses to-day. God bless you, my sweetest love,

Ever your own most affectionate

R. P.

BELVOIR CASTLE,
Sunday, *January* 20, 1833.

I shall try to amuse my own dearest love by an account of this place, which must be a very imperfect one, as I have been here so few hours and as yet have seen so little.

As I approached the castle last night I saw constant flashes of light which at first I took for lightning, but hearing a loud report as we stopped to open the gate I concluded that they were firing cannon for the arrival of the Duke of Gloucester.

This was the case; the Duke having arrived from London about half-an-hour before I came. There were 30 persons at dinner yesterday. The ladies were, in addition to the Duke of Rutland's own family, Lady Willoughby, Alice and Lady Newburgh. The gentlemen, the Duke of Gloucester and his aide-de-camp, the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Villiers, Captain Fitzroy, two Lord Manners, Lord Granby (the Duke's eldest son) Lord Newburgh, Mr. Thoroton, a clergyman who sits at the head of the table, and appears to have the general management of the establishment, Lord Rokeby, Lord Jermyn, Mr. Drummond, Captain Wortley (the last three are sons-in-law to the Duke), Irving, a city merchant, a great friend of the Duke, myself and two or three others whose names I do not know. Jonathan I forgot.

Before dinner a golden key of one of the towers of the castle was presented to the Duke of Gloucester by a young man whose father is a tenant of the Duke of Rutland, and who holds his lands by the tenure of presenting this key to any member of the Royal Family who may arrive at Belvoir Castle. There were short speeches made by the two Dukes and the tenant.

The room we met in before dressing and before dinner is a gallery of immense length, with tapestry hangings, loose on the walls, and some pictures. There are three fire-places; from the windows, particularly those in the bow, there is a most extensive view over a flat country spreading in each direction, excepting one (where there is an irregular hill covered with wood) until the castle meets the sky. The country is as ugly as it is possible to conceive a country to be, but still the castle stands on the very top of an almost isolated hill, and of course the view from its extent is very striking.

The dinner was magnificent. I have seen nothing like it, or indeed like the whole establishment, since

we were at Windsor Castle when George 4th was there. The dinner room is very splendid, lighted in parts by four chandeliers each having several wax candles, and by lamps singly on the walls and candles on the table. The plate (with the exception of the candle-sticks) beautiful, of frosted silver. There were speeches again from the two Dukes, the Duke of Rutland congratulating himself on the arrival of his royal guest, proposing his health, then that of the Duchess, and so on, all done very quietly, and in very good taste.

We sat late, rather, after dinner, the Duke of Gloucester not making a move, and afterwards the Duke of Gloucester, Duke of Portland, Lord Rokeby, and I played at whist till bed-time about 12. We played in the long gallery of which I spoke. The rest of the party were in another room, not, I should conceive, in the new drawing-room. At least, when I went to see it this morning, it had not the appearance or the feel of a room constantly inhabited. I never saw anything approaching to it in splendour or beauty. The ceiling is in three or four large compartments, each with a very gay and beautiful painting, with much gold light work between the paintings. On the walls are panels of a very light blue damask, not occupying nearly the whole of the wall, with white and gold between and round each panel. The gold is the most beautiful carving that can be imagined, very light, brought from Marie Antoinette's apartment at the Trianon at Versailles. The carpet is a Tournay carpet made for the room. There is a picture gallery with a tolerably good collection of pictures, through which you pass from the long gallery to the stairs.

I am just come from the chapel within the castle, where we had the morning service performed by the Mr. Thoroton of whom I spoke. The singing and instrumental music by the band of the Leicester

Militia, which was in attendance after dinner. Mr. Thoroton has proposed to me to accompany him over the castle, and to the mausoleum, and I shall go with him as soon as I have sealed this letter. If it amuses or interests my own dearest Julia, I shall have spent a pleasanter hour in writing it to you than I shall spend until my return. Give my love to all the little ones, and believe me, my own dearest love,

Your most affectionate husband,

R. P.

CHAPTER VII

AN INTERLUDE AS PREMIER

It has been said by Mr. Gladstone that there were two Peels, one before, and one after, the Reform Act. When Sir Robert Peel took his seat in the House of Commons at the opening of 1833 as the leader of his 150 followers, he made it his object to rebuild a new party on the principles, and under the name, of Conservatism. In pursuit of this object he adopted a very moderate and conciliatory line, declaring that he was in favour of reforming whatever needed reformation, and actually supporting the Whig Government during the sessions of 1833 and 1834 on sixteen out of the twenty most important domestic questions that came up for discussion.

In later years his opponent and rival Lord John Russell has named this conduct as one of Peel's chief titles to the gratitude of his countrymen:

"After the contest which took place upon the Reform Bill it was to be dreaded that those who opposed that Bill, expecting results from it calamitous to the country, would have retired in disgust from public contests and thereby have left a war of classes to be carried on, which would have involved permanent injury to this country. I consider Sir Robert Peel to have been the man who prevented such a contest taking place."

And further he said:

"My testimony would always be that the harmony which has prevailed for the last few years, and the safety which we have enjoyed during times of trouble and contention in this country, have been mainly owing to the course which he thought it his duty to follow."

Thus he guided the English people safely along the isthmus threatened on either hand by the fierce gulfs of social strife. The party organised on such principles thus rose in numbers from 150 in 1833, to 250 at the election of 1835, and thence to 320 in 1837. At length, the great victory of 1841 came to crown these prolonged preparations. The aim of Peel was described by himself in 1838: "My object for some years past has been to lay the foundations of a great party which, existing in the House of Commons, and deriving its strength from the popular will, should diminish the risk and deaden the shock of collisions between the two deliberative branches of the Legislature."

It would appear from this last quotation that his chief anxieties lay in the direction of the House of Lords, where the traditions of the old Toryism still maintained their strength. And this was so. The following letter furnishes a specimen of the anxieties aroused during these years in the breast of Sir Robert at the undue activities of his party in that House. For the new Conservative party was constantly threatened with disruption. As Sir James Graham wrote of it in 1839: "To bring this great body together has been an immense effort; to have restrained its eager haste so long has been the triumph of discretion and good government."

It may indeed be asserted that the triumph of 1841 would have come much earlier had it not been for three separate interventions of the monarchy upon the political stage. First, at the close of 1834, William IV abruptly dismissed his Whig Ministry, and Peel was summoned from Rome. On arrival he accepted the post of Premier and dissolved Parliament, but did not secure a majority, and after a short struggle resigned office in 1835. This entry into power was decidedly premature, and only served to strengthen and consolidate the Whig party. Again, the accession of Queen Victoria, two years later, undoubtedly prolonged the tenure of office by Lord Melbourne, for it was generally felt that it would be inadvisable to perplex a young Queen by a change of Ministers. Thirdly, the Bedchamber question in 1839 between the Court and Sir Robert actually enabled the Whig Ministers to resume the Office which they had resigned.

WHITEHALL,
July 30, 1834.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I was in the greatest fright yesterday just after I had written my letter to you from the Library of the House of Commons. I went into the House of Lords and found the Duke of Wellington proposing the reintroduction of those clauses into the Irish Coercion Bill, the omission of which caused the retirement of Lord Grey, and the reintroduction of which against the will of the present Government would have brought on a collision between the Lords and Commons, and probably have broken up the present Government.

The Opposition mustered very strong, the friends of Government were comparatively few, and I have not a doubt that, if the Duke had divided the House,

the clause would have been introduced, and, whether the Government broke up or not, my departure from Town to-morrow would have been impossible. However, the Duke did not divide, and my horses are, thank God, ordered for to-morrow to carry me to my own dear Love.

Julia (for I have scratched out *little*) is by my side and desires her best love.

I enclose a note I have just got from the Duchesse de Dino inviting us and the children, if they were to be of the party, to Talleyrand's country seat Valencay. If we should pass near it, it would be an excellent opportunity of seeing a specimen of French society in country life.

I chose your parasol myself, have got your little watch with a very good character of it from Mr. Dent, and have executed every commission myself, except the whip, which I will go for in the course of the day.

Ever, my own dearest Julia,

Most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

On the occasion above mentioned when Sir Robert was suddenly summoned from Rome to become Prime Minister, he writes the following letter to Lady Floyd on the very day on which he returned:

December 9, 1834.

DEAR LADY FLOYD,

I write a very hasty line to thank you for your kind inquiries and good wishes.

I left Julia and our daughter Julia this morning at Dover. They had travelled with me from Rome to Dover, and had only slept four nights out of twelve, but were as well as could be expected after such fatigue. I trust they will be here to-night.

Ever yours,

R. P.

(Written the very day on which he returned to England to be Prime Minister.)

The diplomatist who was afterwards Sir James Hudson was dispatched to summon Peel home. He was for the future nicknamed "Hurry Hudson," from Disraeli's description, "the hurried Hudson rushed into the Chambers of the Vatican." As a matter of fact, he found Sir Robert with his wife and daughter Julia at a ball at the house of Princess Torlonia. The journey was accomplished in twelve days, and, in the words of Sir Robert, "Julia travelled over Alps, precipices, and snow, eight nights out of twelve in the carriage."

Those were days in which Sir Robert could still enjoy himself. Though he was now Prime Minister he can write in January 1835:

I went to bed at two on Friday morning, rose at four, travelled to Drayton, and had the cordial satisfaction of a ball in the evening, at which Lady Peel and Julia, after their journey, danced with a spirit worthy of their Italian fame. Next day I shot eleven wild ducks, twelve pheasants, and I know not how much besides.

As will be seen from the two following letters, the younger members of the family seem very anxious to ascertain whether "Papa will stay in much longer," and whether "the Whigs will come in soon." The Muse of History made haste to answer the former question in the negative, and the latter question in the affirmative.

HATFIELD,
February 26, 1835.

MY DEAR MAMA,

I am much obliged to you for your kind letter. Give my love to all at home. Do you think Papa will stay in much longer? We are quite well. I hope all of you are. I hope Robert likes Arrow.

Good-bye.
I remain,
Your affectionate son,
JOHN PEEL.

Johnny has written this letter himself except that I have written it in pencil so that he might copy it.

Good-bye.
(*Sgd.*) FREDERICK PEEL.

HATFIELD,
March 3, 1835.

MY DEAREST MAMA,

I am very much obliged for your kind letter. I could not write before because I had no paper, and this paper was given me by Curzon. The holydays I think begin on the 8th of March. We still go on with Football. Do you think the Whigs will come in soon? To-day is pancake day. I think I shall have the letter ready for Mr. Varley to take to you. He said he would. I think you told us in one of your letters that Julia had nearly 100 masters, but she told me she had not. Give my love to dear Papa, brothers and sisters. When do you mean to come down here again? When you do, will you bring Arthur and Julia? Will you tell Robert that I have got a frank of Colonel Peel?

Good-bye.
Your most affectionate son,
FREDERICK PEEL.

I hope Mr. Everard is quite well. He teaches Arthur I think. Give my love to him.

Troubles with the Peers and also with the Monarch now resumed their sway.

WHITEHALL,
August 3, 1835.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

Bain tells me that he has already forwarded your Bible and Prayer Book.

I have written to Mr. Faithful, thanking him for his letters about the Boys, and assuring him that we were greatly pleased by them.

I thought Robert was not looking quite well, and remember I was struck by something about his eyes.

There is a card inviting us to dinner at Syon to-morrow, to meet their Majesties.

Look at the leading articles in the *M. Chronicle* and *Observer*. You will see something respecting the meetings of the Peers at this house on Friday and Saturday last. Everything is in a very unpleasant state in the House of Peers respecting the Corporation Bill, and the old game of the Ultra Peers, Lord Winchelsea, Duke of Newcastle, etc., is again being played. I told our friends, those of the Peers who were in our Cabinet, that I would take the consequences of my own acts, but I could not take the consequences of other people's—particularly when I disapproved of their acts.

I met the Duke of Cumberland at dinner at Beckett's on Saturday. He and Sir Charles Wetherell came up from the House of Lords which sat on Saturday. He was very violent, talked of honour and conscience and seemed determined on taking a different course from that which I had taken in the House of Commons. I have long foreseen that something disagreeable would happen respecting this Bill in the Lords.

I had a meeting of persons of the House of Commons here this morning, and earnestly advised them not

to recall our friends to Town again for the purpose of taking divisions. I was asked how long I meant to remain. I said I would wait until Friday, for which day the Irish Corporation Bill is fixed, but that I should return Saturday morning even if it should be necessary for me to come up again, when the Bills are returned from the Lords. I was told that my going would be the signal for general flight. I said I could not help it—that I had done all I could and I should complain of no one who followed my example, particularly if they were ready to return in case of necessity. I think there will be a pretty general move on Saturday. I believe it will be impossible to have the fish dinner on Wednesday on account of the House of Lords and the Corporation Bill. I have earnestly advised them to give it up this year altogether, and have positively declared I will not stay for it, if they fix, as they wish to do, Saturday for it.

I hope and expect most fully to be back with you on Saturday—perhaps to dinner. Everything that is taking place here makes me, if possible, more anxious to rejoin you and be at rest.

Since I wrote the last word, Lord Wharncliffe and Lord Fitzgerald have been here to report the result of a large meeting of Peers at the Duke of Wellington's this morning. The Falmouths, Winchelseas, Cumberlands and so forth have completely succeeded. They have resolved on a course quite different from that which I took. What the consequences will be I cannot foresee. Some think immediate adjournment of both Houses. Others, the resignation of the Ministers. *I will not be made responsible for the acts of the Lords.*

God bless you, my dearest Love,

Ever most affly.,

R. P.

WHITEHALL,
August 4, 1835.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

The only thing I could do yesterday was to go as far as Hancocks, to execute your commission about the glass for flowers. I thought you would prefer a different form from that which I bought from the little German or Frenchman in Wardour Street. I have here the result of my inquiries at Hancocks, safely packed up.

You will see what passed in the Lords last night, and that, in consequence of the decision taken in the morning at the Duke of Wellington's, the Government was beaten by a majority of more than two to one. What will be the result of all this it is difficult to foresee. How fortunate it is that the fish dinner was put off for Wednesday. It would not have been an agreeable meeting.

I had no thought of going to Syon to-day to meet their Majesties at dinner, and if I had, I should certainly now have avoided it.

I suppose the King and the Court will be in ecstasies with the division of last night, in my opinion with little reason. No good will come from what has happened.

I write little scraps to you at a time, my dearest Love, and could fancy I was talking with you, as we walked together on the Terrace, or your walk.

Ever my dearest Love,
R. P.

STATE PAPER OFFICE,
August 5, 1835.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I write to you and date to you from all sorts of places. The truth is, I am very busily occupied every day with all sorts of meetings, all persons being occupied in winding up the business of their several departments before quitting town. I am

here too early and have taken up my pen to write to you my daily letter.

Hardinge was with me before I left town. He went to Syon yesterday, and said it was a most princely affair; about 70 persons were there, all of whom dined together in the same room with the King and Queen. The King, he said, made speeches without end. Lord Melbourne and Rice were of the party. The former came back to the Lords about ten, and made a speech in a state of great excitement, being very drunk. Hardinge says Rice was equally so.

You will see that we had His Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland before the House of Commons last night, not in person, but in respect of his conduct in regard to Orange Lodges in the Army.

You will, I know, be glad to hear that all is right again with Sir A. Grant. I met him in the street yesterday and walked with him down to the House of Commons, and told him that, unfinished and uncomfortable as we were, we should be very glad to see *him* at Drayton. He was charmed.

He said he knew that Dowbiggin was devoting his whole time, and his best workmen, to our furniture, and that in consequence of his exertions, and the manner in which Smirke had spoken of his estimates for our furniture, there was little doubt that the Carlton Club Committee would employ him for the new Club House.

Croker is just this moment come in, having driven up from Molesey to attend our meeting; we are still waiting, however, for Wynn and Lord Canterbury, so I may go on with my letter. I hope the boys will be charmed with my present of yesterday. Take care of the *arrows*.

I defy all attempts to detain me after Friday night, and shall expire if I do not dine with my own Love on Saturday. But I have no doubts or fears. The King and Queen dine with Lord Ailsa on Tuesday.

He is turning again, and will shortly be a violent Conservative.

Ever, my darling Love,
Most affly. yours,
R. P.

August 6, 1835.

My own dearest Love,

Nothing particular has occurred in respect to the Government. I have made my views and intentions known, so that whatever may occur, I shall be at perfect liberty to act at the time in my own sense of what is right and becoming, and no friend or foe will be able to say that I have taken them by surprise.

As far as I can understand the Lords will take a course in which the Government and House of Commons will not acquiesce, but I am no party to that course being taken.

I have no reason whatever to doubt that I shall be with you again on Saturday.

I have had Smirke here to-day, and Dowbiggin to meet him.

Methly did not come, not perhaps having received Smirke's message. I told Smirke I was not altogether satisfied with his (Methly's) proceedings, and thought him very dilatory. Smirke said, the same complaint was made of him at the Duke of Sutherland's, but that the work he had done there was excellent. I told Smirke he was at liberty to employ Somers if he pleased. I believe I have executed every commission you gave me, and thought of all your suggestions. But I shall see you so soon, that I will tell you all about them when we have the happiness of meeting.

Ever my dearest love,
Most truly and affectionately yours,
R. P.

British Museum,
Saturday, *August* 7, 1835.

My own dearest Love,

The consequence of my attendance on the Committee of the House of Commons yesterday was the necessity of my coming here (the British Museum), where I have been ever since the meeting at my house was over.

I had desired Col. Wood as he was leaving the House about half-past 6 yesterday, to make my excuse to the King, for the truth is, I ought to have been in the House. I found, however, that Spring Rice, Poulett Thomson, and others of the Ministers were going to the dinner, and therefore went.

All the Elder Brothers of the Trinity House were there, in uniform. The Governor and Deputy Governor of the Bank, the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the East India Company, Custom House, Excise, etc., etc. The King was most marked in his civility to me. He made Lord Camden, who is Master of the Trinity House, sit on his right hand. Then he called to me to take the place next to Lord Camden.

The King was by no means courteous towards his Ministers. He drank wine with me about ten times, and on the last occasion said, I shall now drink to the health of Lady Peel, and all those that are dear to you, whom you have left at home.

He made a vast number of speeches, some very long, and seemed to have the greatest pleasure in making them, and in doing all the duties of a chairman. I was rather sorry to hear him making these long speeches on very delicate matters before the servants, and in the hearing of the Regimental Band.

I have sent you down the steward's room boy.

My own Love, do not let Roberts or any other person tease you about their complaints. They will fret and worry you to death with their selfish wants, and will not make any allowance for the state of the

house, and all those things which we ourselves were ready to make allowance for.

Ever, my own dearest Julia, with best love to all the children,

Most affectionately yours,

R. P.

A few months earlier Charles Greville had noted in his diary:

"Peel is an enviable position; in the prime of life, *facile princeps* in the House of Commons, unshackled by party connections and prejudices, universally regarded as the ablest man . . . no matter how unruly the House, how impatient or fatigued, the moment he rises all is silence, and he is sure of being heard with profound attention and respect. This is the most enjoyable period of his life, and he must make the most of it, for when time and the hour shall bring about his return to power, his cares and anxieties will begin, and with whatever success his ambition may hereafter be crowned, he will hardly fail to look back with regret to this holiday time of his political career. How free and light he must feel at being liberated from the shackles of his old connections! And then the satisfactory consciousness of being by far the most eminent man in the House of Commons!"[1]

This holiday time had now been interrupted by a brief interlude of office, but not before Sir Robert had verified the remark that his father used to make that his son would never display his talents in their fullness until he held supreme place.

Monday, *April* 11, 1837.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

I received this morning the line you sent me on Sunday.

[1] Greville's *Journal*, vol. iii, p. 64, February 22, 1834.

This has been a bright, fresh day—little Arthur has had 2 hours' ride with Mr. Parkinson on the Downs, and I think you will be surprised when you see that dear little high-spirited boy the picture of health and fun.

We have all since his ride been walking on the sea beach and have had fine splashing of the waves in our faces.

Ever most affectionately yours,
JULIA PEEL.

The following refer to shooting visits to the Duke of Rutland:

LONGSHAWE LODGE, BAKEWELL,
August 12, 1837.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

We have had a horrid day here to-day; pelting on the moors without the least shelter except such as one umbrella could give to three of us. Conceive my having to send my stupid servant all the way back to Drayton for the detonating caps for my guns. I gave them to him myself, but seeing the blunders he made I stopped the carriage before we got to the White Gates and asked him if he was sure he had put up the caps. He said, "Oh, yes." The first thing he told me this morning was that he was very sorry, but he had left them behind. It really was the most flagrant case of blunders I ever knew. I am, therefore, stiff and limp this evening. My love to all.

Most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

BAKEWELL,
Wednesday, *August* 1838.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

Here we are assembled at an early hour, at least the shooters are, waiting for breakfast. We had a very good bag yesterday. The Duke of Rutland

and I shot together and Sir Richard Sutton and Lord Southampton were the other party.

I shot . . .	24	brace of grouse
The Duke . .	13½	brace
Sir R. Sutton . .	18½	brace
Lord Southampton .	16	brace
Total . . .	72	brace

I walked the whole day fagging through the thick heather and up the steep hills, and I really can walk better than I ever could in my life.

I have nothing to tell you but the shooting adventures, for we are up pretty early and retire very early—there is not much variety in our proceedings.

The Duke of Devonshire has left Chatsworth and our party has received the addition of Lord George Manners, one of the Duke's younger sons, and a Mr. Cooke, an agent to the Duke's Derbyshire estates. They sleep at the public-house where our horses and servants are, there not being room for them in the house here.

I am very glad indeed to hear that the horse is likely to suit my dear child. I hope she looks well on horseback, and holds herself upright and shows confidence in her seat.

Ever most affectionately yours, my own Julia,

ROBERT PEEL.

The following letter furnishes an example of the profound moral influence that Sir Robert sought to exercise upon his sons.

WHITEHALL,
January 28, 1839.

MY DEAR FREDERICK,

I take for granted you are wholly and entirely free from the disgrace which has been inflicted on your companions, and I do earnestly implore you

for your own sake, for the sake of your character and future happiness, for the sake of your name and family, and above all, for the sake of example to your younger brothers, to have manliness and firmness enough to resist the influence of bad example and the temptation to do what is wrong.

Do not listen to the silly advice that only turns industry and honourable exertion into ridicule. It is only given by those who have no hope to distinguish themselves and who wish to drag down superior minds and talents to their own level.

For God's sake, remember your younger brothers. They will form themselves on the example of their elder ones, and it is incumbent on you to set a good one.

Write to us immediately and comfort us. Tell us that you are fulfilling the promises you made to us, and that you are resolved not to swerve from the path which will lead you to honour.

Your affectionate father,

ROBERT PEEL.

The two following letters indicate the rising discontent in the country. After a quarter of a century of peace, trade restrictions continued to create an impossible situation. The way was preparing for the advent of the Ministry of 1841.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,
Tuesday, 1839.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I believe the Government is seriously alarmed and that it is a consolation to them to have Parliament sitting in case of any explosion. My firm belief is that Parliament will continue sitting 3 weeks longer, mainly for the reason above mentioned, the unwillingness of the Government to part with it.

Last night Lord John Russell, to my great sur-

prise, withdrew his measure for appointing police in Birmingham and adopted my views, setting aside his own Town Council and depriving them of any interference with the new police.

This has made his Radical friends furious with him. They said that whatever I suggested was adopted at once, and that they saw no reason why I should not be the Minister, as my advice was so readily adopted.

To-day is horrible, beyond description. I am writing from the House of Commons, being wet through. Perhaps I shall be able to get home and frank any letter which Tootey may have written to you.

I sent an excuse to Lady Mansfield: we should have been drowned in going. The Duke of Wellington has a concert to-morrow night. This insistent rain adds to the gloomy prospect, for the harvest will probably be a deficient one.

Leopold is coming over. He is said to advise the Queen as to the state of affairs.

Ever, my own dearest love,

Most affectionately your own

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,

July 23, 1839.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

We had some quite unexpected and very important proposals made by the Government last night—a vote of £10,000 to be brought forward to-night for the purpose of providing immediately a police force for Birmingham—an increase of 5,000 men to the Army, and a rural police to be appointed by the magistrates wherever they may think it necessary in the several counties in England.

The truth is that the manufacturing districts in some parts of the North are in a state as unsatis-

factory as Birmingham, and the Government is alarmed and with good reason.

I must be in the House this evening and it is therefore impossible for me to take Julia to Lady de Grey's to-day. I hope I shall be able to take her to-morrow to the Duchess of Somerset. Lady Londonderry's, we find, is not a morning affair. If I can, therefore, I will dine there, and Julia, unless invited to dinner, will come early in the evening before the press of carriages. She could sit with Lady Londonderry's daughter if she arrives rather early.

You must not believe the reports that are spread from Birmingham. A letter which I have had this morning from the Superintendent of the Whitehall Division of Police, who is now in command of the Metropolitan Police of Birmingham, says he cannot discover the slightest trace of any intention to molest us, nor has he heard one expression of a hostile feeling.

I am just returned from four hours' attendance at the Committee and am again going down to the House.

Ever most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

His eldest daughter having now "come out," Sir Robert sometimes combined the duties of chaperon with those of Conservative leader.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,
July 25, 1839.

MY OWN DEAREST,

I suppose Tooti will give you a full account of her amusement—and my penance—at the Duchess of Somerset's yesterday. I dare say she was pleased, but I thought it insufferably dull, lasting from five to twelve as far as we were concerned.

Lord and Lady Jersey and Lady Sarah were there. At first I thought they seemed very shy, but I dare say I was mistaken.

Lady Jersey asked us to go with her into the tent for dinner, and as I think it much better to have no quarrel, no appearance that anyone can remark or talk about, I gave her my arm, and went with her and Lady Londonderry into the tent. We had no beaux for Julia or Lady Sarah. Lord Villiers was not there and I think our object should be to keep on good terms just as usual but to show, very decisively if it be necessary, that we think of no closer connection.

I saw old Colonel Leigh yesterday, who said he was to be at Longshawe on the 10th of August. He is an old Newmarket man, was in the army, and has been a sort of confidant as to horses and racing concerns of the Duke of York, George IV, and various of the sportsmen of days gone by.

We understand that Lord and Lady Jersey were to be at Longshawe, Esterhazy, and, if Esterhazy cannot go, Lord Forester is to take his place.

Lord Forester said that there was not room for him if Esterhazy went. We shall have a very nice little party.

Not a word passed with Lady Jersey, apparently as if she thought it was all over—I mean she never mentioned V. or said a word about going to Drayton.

I have seen the produce of our expenditure of £8 for the two pictures. The Duke of York's portrait is an excellent one, in uniform, so that it should look very gay.

I do not think the business in the House of Commons, however important it may be, could detain me an hour beyond this most stupid Railway Committee from which I am writing my letter to you, because we do not oppose the measures of the Government requisite for the maintenance of the public peace.

Whigs in Opposition would have taken a very different course: they would have opposed us and added to the public excitement and discontent.

I enclose Lord Eglinton's invitation to us, which I have declined for us with abundance of civility.

Ever, my own dearest Love,
Your affectionate,
R. P.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMITTEE ROOM,
July 26, 1839.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

We went to Rosebank yesterday, but there was hardly room for half the party, about 18 in number.

The Cambridges, Croker, Lord and Lady Mansfield, Lady A. Beckett, a Count and Countess Mariendorff, he a Russian and she I believe a Dutchwoman, a very extraordinary-looking person.

There was a conservatory cleared of plants and boarded up, in which there was a dance. Julia has had very nice partners at her two balls, and offers for every dance if I could have stayed, but I do get so tremendously bored after a certain time.

She danced with Lord Grimston and Lord Mulgrave at the Duchess of Somerset's. Lord Leveson and others asked her to dance, but she has been in great request at these balls and very much admired.

Lady Tankerville was very anxious we should go by G.W. Railway this morning to her villa to stay for 1 to 6. Lady Jersey and several others were going. She proposed to me to be of the party and Lady Stanhope pressed me very much to let her take Julia without me. But I had no fancy to go myself, or let Tooty go without me.

Lady Mansfield has asked me to meet the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge at Caen Wood, who are going there to walk about the grounds and to return at six so that the Duchess may go to the opera.

The Counsel has just informed us that the evidence in the railway case is closed. A forty-three days' sitting! We have now to hear speeches of Counsel. I suppose these will consume two or three days, and then the Bill goes to the House to be disposed of there.

There are still vague rumours of some explosion before the end of the session, but I cannot see how it is possible.

I believe Lord Melbourne and Lord John Russell are heartily tired of their positions. The latter is unwell and I have no doubt is most anxious to retire. The Queen, however, will take care that they shall not retire if she can prevent it, and it seems absurd that they should throw up the Government at the end of the session when so many persons have left town.

I keep writing on amidst all the squabbling of Counsel and the noise of the committee, for I have a pleasure in writing and thus making some poor amends for separation.

Ever, my dearest Love,
Most affectionately yours,
R. P.

WHITEHALL,
July 31, 1839.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

My present determination is to leave town with Julia and Robert on Saturday. I shall send Frederick, Arthur, and Johnny to-morrow. Will you inquire what time the coach from Coventry arrives at Fazeley?

Johnny and Arthur are just come quite safe and well. Robert and Frederick are going to-night to the Haymarket with Miranda. Johnny and Arthur under the charge of Towns are to post themselves as near the other party as they can.

I enclose Mr. Faithful's letter. Johnny's expected development of a literary taste seems not to have yet arrived.

We had another late House last night. I had to defend "the Arts" and the Royal Academy. We only succeeded by a majority of 5, 38 to 33. Haydon was the chief secret promoter of the attack upon the Academy. I think you will be greatly pleased with the arrangement I have made for the Terraces. The whole range of vases being of marble will give the terraces a very Italian character.

Ever affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

William had gone to sea April 1838, but I do not include the letters referred to.

Monday, *August* 14, 1839.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I return, as you wished, those most perfect and tender letters from my dearest William. I cannot describe all I feel about him, and the affection he expresses for me is deeply and tenderly returned. I often wish for my little Arthur's sake that I could get him some open sea breezes. The dear fellow is very loving to me and they are so good in every way about everything.

Dearest Robert, believe me,
Most affectionately yours,
JULIA PEEL.

The following records a visit to Lord Londonderry:

WYNYARD,
Saturday, *November* 1, 1839.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

I write this before my departure from Wynyard. A party of about 10 or 12 set out yesterday for Seaham Harbour, leaving this at 10 and returning

at 7. Seaham is about 20 miles from here. It is in the middle of the collieries on a very bleak coast and a very ugly country.

It is highly creditable to Lord and Lady Londonderry to have made a harbour and built a church and created a small town, but it requires some courage to take visitors 40 miles to what is about as interesting to a stranger as Fazeley would be. We had a bad day, drizzly rain wetting the black roads which are bad to traverse, in order to inspect the harbour.

I received in a sort of temporary tent an address from the Town Council of Sunderland. We then adjourned to a small inn, and about two hours in a luncheon with much giving of healths, speaking, huzzaing.

We returned to dinner; there was no addition to the party. The Dukes of Cleveland, Devonshire, and Rutland remained for the ball. Lord Eliot, son of Lord St. Germans, was one of the youths whose name I did not know. Madame D'Almar, in former days Miss Emily Rumbold, was there. She married a Prussian who is now blind, and had a niece with her, daughter of Mr. George Rumbold. The ball began at 10 and I suppose there were 300 persons, at least there was no room at supper prepared for 200 persons. I do not know a soul of the ball guests, except Mr. John Hudson, who overwhelmed me with invitations to Newby, his place in Yorkshire.

Very wisely invitations were sent to everybody, to several who had no evening dress to appear in. The Surveyor of the Collieries, the Harbour Master of Seaham, were there too, and, in short, every decent person within 20 miles. The dancing was in the unfinished drawing-room, in which the marriage ceremony was performed. The Entrance Hall is a very splendid room, not yet finished. The marble columns are from the very same quarry which furnished ours at Drayton. The supper was very

handsome and the table was ornamented with pots bearing grapes and fine orange trees; the roots duly concealed under the table and the stems let through the table.

Ever affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

The following letters refer mainly to school experiences:

Dear Johnny's letter written the day after he first arrived at Eton College, May 8, 1840. *Endorsed by Sir Robert Peel: "My dearest, you must write and comfort the little fellow. R. P."*

ETON,
May 8, 1840.

MY OWN DEAREST DEAREST MAMA,

I hope you are quite well. I am quite well, but so very unhappy, that I wish you would come and see me. It is a very short distance and it will be a nice drive. It only takes half an hour. We have had some rain. I hope dearest Papa got back quite safe, for I am *so* unhappy. Do come. Love to all.

Your most affectionate son,
JOHN PEEL.

Dear Johnny's 2nd letter from Eton after I had gone down to see and console him.—JULIA PEEL.

May 11, 1840.

MY OWN DEAREST MAMA,

I hope you are quite well. I will tell you the whole story of the boy who was drowned. He was pulling in a boat with two other fellows, and there was a barge coming along. The rope of the barge



JOHN FLOYD PEEL (FOURTH SON OF SIR ROBERT PEEL).
From an engraving after a portrait by John Partridge.

caught hold of him but he managed to catch hold of the rope. Then a man came out in a punt with a pole to save him. He gave him the pole to lay hold of, but the man had not strength to hold him and let the pole drop. The boy managed to put his hand and his head above water and call out. After that he sunk. They dragged it and pulled him out. When he was brought out he moved his eyes and his lips and then died. His face was quite pale with some foam over his mouth. It is a very shocken story. I believe the inquest will be held to-morrow. He was put in warm baths and in bed, but to no purpose.

You must not forget to bring Papa, Julia and Eliza to see the places we went to. I am nearly quite happy. The crowd was around the place where the body was put in for an enormous time afterwards. I will do as well as I can.

I am,
Your affectionate son,
JOHN PEEL.

Monday, *May* 18, 1840.

MY DARLING FREDERICK,

On Saturday I went down to Eton to Mr. Coleridge's, and had leave for Johnny to be with me. He was greatly comforted at seeing me. I took him to dine at Windsor and we then walked all over the terrace and the Castle. I left him at Mr. Coleridge's, and I cannot tell you how comfortable, how handsome how like the first gentleman's in the land was Mr. and Mrs. Coleridge's house, dinner, situation, and, in short, all that belongs to them! quite perfect!

I have this morning a nice long letter from dear William at Malta.

Ever most fondly and affectionately yours,
JULIA PEEL.

ETON,
May, 1840.

MY OWN DEAREST MAMA,

I hope you and all are quite well. Can you come and see me on Saturday, for that is the best time. I do not think I shall ever like Eton, they're some very horrid boys here and some very nice ones. Among the nice ones is Croft and Vyse. Bolton Peel is a horrid fellow. I wish very much I was at Home. I do not like Mr. Coleridge so much as I thought I would. I am quite well, but not at all happy. I know I shall never like Eton and I have got all my worst time to come and that is when all the Sixth Form fellows come.

Good-bye.
I am,
Your affectionate son,
JOHN PEEL.

P.S.—Do not forget to come. I want some more white neck handkerchiefs. The maid says I shall want 10 more, because they go to the wash one week and we put on a clean one every day.

WHITEHALL,
May 20, 1840.

MY DEAR FREDERICK,

We are greatly pleased to hear of your nearly successful effort to gain the prize for verses. To be second is a very high distinction, but, independently of this, the proof of honourable ambition is very gratifying. You are already *ἐν προμάχοισι*, and I dare say will soon be the very first of the front rank.

Do you speak on Wednesday, the 3rd of June? Be sure you do not speak too fast, and avoid, as far as you can, giving the speech the character of a mere recitation of a lesson.

Do not be too solicitous about constant action. Speak slowly and very distinctly, and reserve the

action for those parts of the speech which really require it. Tell me the passages you have selected for the speech.

Ever most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
July 28, 1840.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

The Government meant to fix the second reading of the Regency Bill for Thursday, but I made them fix it for to-morrow, so if there is likely to be no opposition to it or not more than a discussion, I shall hope to leave on Thursday.

The flock is all correct. Johnny arrived yesterday —*beau comme un ange*—quite a foot taller than when he left and straight as an arrow.

Frederick has just come, full of satisfaction as to his success at Harrow.

Arthur was delivered here yesterday about an hour since, and I dare say we shall have a very merry dinner. I think I have included all your games. Crook sticks had already attracted my eye and now ornament the staircase. Red-backed almanack shall come with me. Letter weights are promised to-morrow.

Ever your most affectionate,
ROBERT PEEL.

DRAYTON MANOR,
November 1, 1840.

MY DEAREST FREDERICK,

Dr. Wordsworth asks me a question which I have some difficulty in answering, and I am so pleased with the exertions you are making and your honourable desire to distinguish yourself that I am unwilling to answer it, without previously consulting with you.

He asks me whether I think it would be better for

you to be examined for Balliol or for the Harrow Scholarship.

Now if the question were merely between Balliol and Trinity College and entrance in the ordinary way, I should decidedly prefer Trinity College, Cambridge. I conceive the field for exertion is wider at Trinity College, the society larger and certainly at least equal, and my own impression strongly is you would prefer it.

But admission to Balliol gained as a prize and after competition is quite another thing. I should greatly prefer this to the ordinary admission at Trinity, but there is another alternative—the gain of the Scholarship at Harrow and also admission to Trinity, and this would probably be equal in point of distinction to success at the examination for Balliol.

This, however, would suppose that the prospect of succeeding for the Harrow Scholarship is as good as the prospect of succeeding for Balliol. You can judge better than I can whether one is better than the other. You will know what your own feelings and opinions are on this point, and write to me as soon as you can.

Believe me,
Your most affectionate father,
ROBERT PEEL.

DRAYTON MANOR,
December 6, 1840.

MY DEAR FREDERICK,

I am very much pleased by the result of your trial for the Scholarship. I think it was very honourable to you, and, coupled with the good feeling with which you write and the wise determination not to be discouraged, but to try your utmost for success on the next occasion, am almost as well satisfied as I should have been by absolute victory.

Dr. Wordsworth writes to me in very kind and

handsome terms with respect to you and says that the examiners hesitated before they awarded the first place to Lloyd. Between 1,011 and 1,001 marks there is very little difference.

Of this I am quite sure, that it will be infinitely better to fail once and steadily to persevere without discouragement until you succeed than to be victorious and then rest satisfied and relax in exertions. I have frequently seen this to be the consequence of early victory at school and college, and a very lamentable one it is.

Yours most affectionately,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL GARDENS,
Sunday, *January* 31, 1841.

DEAR DEAREST FREDERICK,

Little Arthur is very anxious that I should go to Hatfield to see him, and, according to my promise, I shall go on Friday.

You shall certainly have your Papa's pamphlet of his beautiful speech, an address at Tamworth, as soon as it comes out. The one which you have seen advertised is not the *true* one. I hope you have read your Papa's speech at the opening of Parliament. It is, by all accounts, considered *first rate*, and is worth your understanding. I hope earnestly some day to see you representing the University of Cambridge and your brother Robert that of Oxford. Take particular care to cultivate the graces of enunciation and of manners, speak your words clearly and equally distinct and not hurried. Be nice about your hair and your nails and hands.

Ever your most anxious most devoted Mama,
JULIA PEEL.

P.S.—from Sir Robert Peel.

WHITEHALL,
January 31.

MY DEAREST BOY,

I suppose you have seen what has taken place at Cambridge in consequence of the failure of some of the first-rate classical scholars to come up to the standard required in mathematics, as a *sine qua non* for classical distinction. I hope you will consider this well and guard effectually against a similar mishap. Their misfortune has been clearly owing to their delay in laying a good foundation of mathematics early. If you have not seen the report of what took place I will send you the paper in which I read it.

Ever most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
March 9, 1841.

MY DEAR FREDERICK,

Dr. Wordsworth has written to me respecting your non-observance of rules laid down by him. He states that, for the protection of the Lower boys, he ordered that there should be no fagging after 10 o'clock at night, and that the Lower boys should then be allowed to go quietly to bed.

He states that in defiance of this rule, which he distinctly explained to the Upper boys, you, being Head of the House, had continued the practice which he wished to prohibit.

Now I must entreat you to recollect that if you were a Lower boy I should feel very much hurt that a very reasonable rule intended for your protection and comfort had been disregarded by an Upper boy, and that it is absolutely necessary for the maintenance of the discipline of a public school that rules laid down by the chief authority of that school should be observed, particularly by those boys who are at the head of it.

The time is fast approaching for your leaving Harrow, and I hope you will leave it with as high a character for obedience to just authority as I am sure you will possess for industry and the eagerness to excel. Dr. Wordsworth writes very kindly with regard to you in other matters than that of which he complains.

Most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

April 27, 1841.

MY DEAREST FREDERICK,

Pray tell me whether you have got *Mrs. Gray's Visit to the Tombs of Etruria*, a recent and excellent work, which I am confident gave the hint of the subject set for the verses in the Harrow Prize. There is an article in the last *Edinburgh Review* on this work. Shall I send you Mrs. Gray's book and the last number of the *Review*?

Let me know what are the Greek and Latin books which Dr. Wordsworth may mention as bearing on the subject of the Peel Medal. I will then write to you.

You must turn in your mind the force of the word *Magnus*. Consider what constitutes real greatness—discriminate between true nobleness of mind and the real characteristics of greatness—and such qualities as the ignorant and vulgar consider as the elements of greatness.

Do not undertake competition for the Medal as well as for the verses if the double effort will overtax your strength and health, or if it may incur the risk of your losing the verses.

Put my wishes as to the Medal quite out of the question.

I shall be amply satisfied if you do not make the attempt and I should quite approve of your decision if, upon considering Archdeacon Thorpe's advice as

to mathematical studies, you resolve on applying yourself to them and to the verses and not trying for the Medal.

I myself doubt whether this would not be the wisest course, all things considered, health among the rest, and foremost.

Ever affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

April 30, 1841.

Addressed to Frederick Peel, Esq.,
Rev. Mr. Colenso's,
Harrow.

MY DEAREST FREDERICK,

To qualify you for prizes for which you intend to compete you should read the whole of the *De Naturâ Deorum*, the three parts carefully, and you should read some full commentary which will explain to you the purpose of it and the reference which Cicero makes to the doctrines of Plato and Pythagoras. I dare say there is such a commentary in Valpy's edition of the Delphic classics.

Look at the 6th Book of the Aeneid, particularly from line 679—the interview between Aeneas and the Shade of Anchises, of which probably I was thinking when I suggested your colloquy with the Shade of the Etrurian Warrior, whom you had disturbed.

Read also the notice in the Delphic Virgil on line 728 of the 6th Book of Aeneid. You may find some reference to the doctrines of Plato which may be useful to you.

Affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
May 31, 1841.

MY DEAR FREDERICK,

Has there been anything unusual done in respect to Wilkins being prompted to write twice for

prizes, or in your being called upon to recite his verses?

Robert said that there was a rule laid down when Carslake left that no boy should thereafter, having gained the prize one year, be a competitor for the same prize in a following year. Is this so? I think it is unfair that the present Head of the school should have an exception made in his favour. Would you wish me to write on the subject either to Dr. Wordsworth or Mr. Colenso? I am unwilling to do so without previously communicating with you.

Very affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
June 27, 1841.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I am just going down to the House. We have had 3 long nights and it has been 3 o'clock before I was in bed. To-morrow night and this night will be as late probably as the others. I have in truth passed my time either at this desk or by the table of the House of Commons. We had a very good division last night upon the Corn Laws, and good humour among our friends seemed to be restored. Have they carried the hay? I fear the rain came just in time to spoil the little hay which was cut. How are the plantations near the pool?

I am sent for to the House.

Ever most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

The following letter is written to his daughter on the occasion of her marriage to Lord Villiers:

To Julia Villiers

WHITEHALL,
July 16, 1841.

MY DEAREST DEAREST JULIA,

The conviction of your happiness is the only thing that can reconcile me to the loss of your society,

but I make the sacrifice willingly for an object so dear to me as your comfort and welfare.

I need not say how sincerely I pray to Almighty God that every blessing may attend you. If among the presents you received was a little purse put the enclosed in it.

Give my affectionate regards to Villiers and believe me, my dearest Julia,

Most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

The two following letters are from Robert, the eldest son, to his brother Frederick:

OXFORD,
Tuesday, *October* 9, 1841.

MY DEAR FREDERICK,

I am now settled in Peckwater Quad and am becoming quite reconciled to an Oxford life. I hope you also are established in your College at Cambridge. Liddell is my tutor, and to-day we have our first lecture on Herodotus.

My rooms here are not gentlemen Commoners', and, therefore, are not very comfortable, for my servant is obliged to occupy my study as a bedroom and has to pass through my sitting-room to get to it.

How do you find your pecuniary finances? Mine are getting gradually drained, and the number of applications and cards which I receive from the various tradesmen are very considerable and a great bore. Villiers paid me a visit yesterday and had some luncheon with me. He told me of the death of General Fuller. Write to me soon and tell me how you are getting on.

Very affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

November 14, 1841.

My dear Frederick,

Last Thursday I drove over to Upton in Warwickshire, to see Villiers and Julia. The distance was considerable, Upton being only 12 miles from Warwick.

I have bought a beautiful little Blenheim spaniel, which is very fond of me and sleeps with me. Lady Jersey and Clementina Villiers came to Oxford a short time since. Nicholas Esterhazy has returned to England and the marriage is to take place before the end of this month.

I am learning Tennis and get on capitally. The marking is now almost the only difficulty I have.

Harrow is to all accounts getting up in the world, there being 32 new men up this year. The 5th of November was hardly recognised here and only two men got rusticated for letting off fireworks in the Quad. I have dined with the Dean of Christchurch and breakfasted with Buckland. The latter is very amusing, the former uncommonly stiff.

Your affectionate brother,

Robert Peel.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CARES OF OFFICE, 1841–2

IN the closing months of 1841 no wise man could contemplate the condition of this country without dismay. An adventurous policy had entangled us in a war with China, and was involving us in a disaster in Afghanistan. What was very much more serious, it seemed as if our growing population was inextricably doomed to unrelieved distress and the most acute misery. By a mysterious anomaly, a quarter of a century of peace had left us an unutterably wretched people. Deficits in our national budget were returning as regularly as the spring time; and our export trade between 1815 and 1841 had remained almost entirely stationary. The dilemma seemed insoluble. If we were to reduce our tariffs, by means of which we raised so much of our revenue, would not that action plunge us straight into bankruptcy? If, on the other hand, we were to maintain them, would they not more and more throttle our commercial life? The soil seemed to heave with the certainty of coming revolution.

It was in these circumstances that Sir Robert Peel acceded to power and formed what Mr. Gladstone has described as "a perfectly organised administration." It was, in his words, "a most honourable and high-minded Government, because its legis-

lative acts tended greatly, and almost uniformly, to increase the well-being of the country, and to strengthen the attachment of the people to the throne and the laws; while it studied in all things to maintain the reverse of an ambitious or disturbing policy."[1]

It was on March 11, 1842, that Sir Robert exposed the condition of the country and expounded his scheme of reconstruction. That date may be taken as the inauguration of a new era in our history, and as the birthday of the prosperity and glory of the Victorian Age.

It was useless, argued the Minister, to resort to continued borrowing, and it was equally useless and short-sighted to entertain any proposal for increasing taxation on the articles consumed by the labouring classes of society. Then, in a passage for ever memorable in the history of finance, the Minister appealed to those ranks behind him, to the possessors of property, "not to consent with folded arms to view the annual growth of this mighty evil. If you do permit this evil to continue, you must expect the severe but just judgment of a reflecting and retrospective posterity." The remedy was the imposition of a tax on incomes. But the Minister went further than the plan of merely raising enough money to make good the annual deficit of the Budget. He proposed to raise the Income Tax for the twofold purpose "of not only supplying the deficiency of the Revenue, but of enabling me with confidence and satisfaction to propose great commercial reforms." In other words, he initiated Free Trade in the two Budgets of 1842 and 1845.

I mention these facts in order to furnish the proper

[1] Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, vol. i, p. 642.

setting for the following letters, which explain themselves.

WHITEHALL,
Friday, *November* 19, 1841.

MY DEAREST FREDERICK,

I am happy to tell you that we are all well, and everything in politics is going on satisfactorily. I hope you read in the paper the silly speech of Lord Londonderry, not signing the requisition to Lord Grey. He, Lord Londonderry, is so provoked with himself for refusing the good things so kindly offered him by your Papa that he seems to be acting like a most foolish man, not to call it by another name.

Eton holidays commence, I believe, on the 9th December, and I really hear—but can scarcely believe the folly of the thing—that they are to be lengthened an additional week in consequence of the birth of the Prince! The losses of the Tower in consequence of the fire are fortunately not so great as was believed at first. The gun lock flints were so acted upon by fire as to become species of beautiful green malachite. I have just been to see the very beautiful sketches and drawings of the late Sir David Wilkie—you know he died, poor man, on his way home very suddenly from Jerusalem. His paintings amount to 260, actually done during 10 months' absence from England. I am going this evening in the Queen Dowager's box to see and hear Miss Kemble, who is said to be a wonderful singer and actress. Dear good Queen Adelaide is a model with so much graciousness.

Your ever affectionate Mama,
JULIA PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
December 2, 1841.

MY DEAREST FREDERICK,

However occupied I am, you are never out of my thoughts. Let me know how you are going

on at Trinity College, who are your friends and what you are reading.

Ever most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
December 10, 1841.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

I must write to you before I set out for Windsor. I dined at Lord Aberdeen's yesterday to meet the new Spanish and Danish Ministers, the latter a gentlemanlike man with good manners and prepossessing appearance.

Lord Jersey dined there and confirmed the accounts as to fresh delays about the marriage.

Prince Esterhazy, the father, writes to the son to say that he will be here before it can be concluded, that the son ought to have known that it would not probably take place before Advent, that no dispensation here would be valid for the purpose of permitting it, that, as to his son's complaint that his position in respect to Lady Sarah on account of the delay is a painful one, he had better come over to Brussels some time hence when he may meet his father.

In this letter to the son there is no message or kind word to Lady Sarah. Lord Jersey considers it advisable to postpone the marriage until after Advent.

My impression is that Prince Esterhazy, the father, in allowing his son to come here has been speculating upon the marriage being broken off for some cause occurring here that may save young Esterhazy's honour, and that he is still speculating that the Jerseys may be provoked by impatience and disgust at his coldness and delays to break it off yet.

We begin our Cabinets on Tuesday next.

Ever most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

Thursday, *December*, 1841

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

Here I am again solitary in this great house, where every room and every step that I take reminds me of your absence and makes me long for your return to me.

I came here from Windsor Castle early this morning. All my business with Her Majesty was transacted very satisfactorily. The Prince and She seemed very happy, very contented and in very good humour. I told you that I went out to shoot with the Prince.

Late in the evening I had my interviews with the Queen and him.

The Queen wished to have a Quadrille last night as she had had the night before I came there. She asked Lord Jersey to go to town and bring Lady Clementina Villiers to form one of it, and promised to send the Royal carriage to Hampton Court for Miss Paget, the Maid of Honour. The carriage however never went, through a blunder, and Lady Clementina was not well enough to come, and there being only in the house the party of yesterday with the addition of a certain Lady Isabella Wemyss—beyond a Quadrille age—it was difficult enough with the aid of Lord Delawarr and Dr. Pretorius to make up the Quadrille. Jersey, Dr. Stockmar, and I played at shilling whist with the Duchess of Kent.

Just before dinner poor Lincoln came into my sitting-room, being invited to the Castle. He looked dreadfully ill and was very much dejected.

The Queen asked him to dance, not suspecting anything was the matter, and of course he could not refuse.

The Prince afterwards remarked to me that he must be very unwell and asked me the cause of his dejection, but I revealed no secrets.

Lincoln told me that Sir William Follett had given him exactly the same opinion on every part of his

melancholy case which I had given him, and was anxious for an amicable separation but thought it unavoidable. He thought no Court would allow Lady Lincoln to claim access to the children after the letters she had written, and the avowals made to the Duke of Newcastle. Poor Lincoln's is a pitiable case.

I did not know that Robert was not going to Vale Royal, but left home under the impression that he was going there.

I have not stirred from this desk since my return to town.

Ever, my own dearest love,
Most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
Saturday, *December* 3, 1841.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

I will send you my letter of to-day by Robert, whom I found here on my return from Windsor early this morning and who will join you at Drayton this evening. We, that is, Lord Lyndhurst, the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Wharncliffe, and I, went to London yesterday to attend a Council.

I had a long audience of the Queen before the Council. She looked very well, was in very good spirits and good humour. Lord Lyndhurst and I, together with Lords Jersey, Delawarr, and Liverpool, dined and slept at the Castle. There were at Dinner the Duchess of Kent, Lady Caroline Cocks, Lord Somers' daughter whom we met at Warwick Castle, Lady Gainsborough, a daughter of Lord Roden, in waiting, young Arbuthnot and his wife, and men belonging to the palace.

The Queen played at a round game after dinner. Jersey, Lord Lyndhurst, and I played one rubber at Whist with the Duchess of Kent, whom I had the

honour of having for my partner. The Duchess and I sustained a loss of three shillings each. The Queen retired very soon after half-past 10.

I got up at 7 this morning and arrived here at 10. I sent some game which was in the house to Lady Floyd and Lady Fuller.

We have fixed the meeting of Parliament for Thursday, the 3rd of February. I have had an opportunity of doing a kind thing by Lord Salisbury and was glad of it.

The Duke of Portland has resigned the office of Lord-Lieutenant of the County of Middlesex and I asked the Queen yesterday to allow me to offer it to Lord Salisbury. She readily consented.

The King of Prussia says he will certainly come if he possibly can for the Royal Christening.

I think I have now told you all the news,

Ever affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
December 14, 1841.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I am just going to the Cabinet, which meets to-day for the first time after some interval. The Duke of Wellington has come to London and Stanley, and I take for granted all will be present.

If I can I will try to see Tooti and will bring you word about her.

I cannot tell you how lonely this is. I have sat down after dinner of late and written my letters till twelve, but I do not much like writing, and still less reading the detestable scrawls that are addressed to me, by candle light.

Give my best love to all.

Most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
December 16, 1841.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

Your trick upon Johnny was a capital one, and I give you great credit for keeping your own counsel and surprising all parties.

Lord Westmorland died last night. My torments will now begin. He leaves vacant a Blue Ribband and the Lord-lieutenancy of the County of Northampton. The number of lieutenancies I have had to fill is quite surprising. This will be a very embarrassing one, for Lord Cardigan is a candidate and certainly is not a very fit person to preside over the magistracy of any county. His Lady too to be at the head of Society!

I suppose that Lord Westmorland's death will not have much effect on the marriage of Lady Sarah. Lord Jersey was going yesterday to walk with her and he spoke of it as if she was harassed, as she might well be. Lady Jersey was going to the Haymarket Theatre. She must have been there at the time when her father died. This perhaps will annoy her. It ought to do.

It seems to have been a fine day, but I have been hard at work the whole of it from half-past seven and am now almost knocked up.

Give my love and my blessing to all; I delight in the thought of seeing you all next week. I shall probably bring Drummond with me.

Ever affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
December 20, 1841.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I was alarmed this morning by Sir James Graham telling me that he had received a command from the Lord Steward to dine at Windsor on Wednesday next and stay till Friday. I wrote

immediately to Her Majesty mentioning that I proposed to leave town on Wednesday, if Her Majesty had no particular commands for me.

We shall have a large party on Friday next. Will you send for fish to Birmingham? Croker, I dare say, will come next week, and Aberdeen perhaps for a day or two. We shall be a very happy party.

I called on Miranda last night and had a long conversation with her about her affairs. She cried very much, but she was not very clear in the account of her affairs. I wrote a letter from myself to her solicitor which I advised her to send in order to show him that I was interesting myself in her affairs.

Ever my dearest love,
Yours affectionately,
ROBERT PEEL.

DOWNING STREET,
December 30, 1841.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

I got both your dear letters this morning. I thought you would consider Robert improved. I liked his appearance very much. Mary Dawson called this morning and said she had heard very good accounts of Robert, that he was much liked, and that, contrary to the practice of the majority of Gentleman Commoners, he was studious and read a good deal.

He did not speak in such glowing terms as I expected of his delight at Oxford, and I am not sorry for this. I believe it is generally the case that young men do not like Oxford on their first entrance.

Do try to get Tooti to pay you a visit with Villiers. I did not expect that Upton was a perfect Arcadia. I feared very much, notwithstanding the efforts to conceal its defects, that there must be abundance of lurking deformity about an old Country House in the neighbourhood of Banbury. I have dined alone

since I returned from Windsor. We begin our Cabinets to-morrow.

The Duke of Portland merely resigned from age and a wish for repose, not at all from ill-humour. I have a letter from him to-day very grateful for that complimentary one which I addressed to him on his retirement.

You must not be surprised at my *décousu* style and at my sending you my news by fits and starts.

I am writing at my desk in Downing Street, and have had 10 interruptions since I began my letter.

Ever, my dearest love,
Most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WINDSOR CASTLE,
January 3, 1842.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

It is two o'clock and we are just returned from the Chasse. It was a very good one, and I apprehend the principal reason for summoning Stanley and me here was that we might accompany the Prince on his best day's shooting.

The Duchess of Kent dined here yesterday, and I had, as usual, the pleasure of playing a solemn rubber at Whist with her Royal Highness.

No one is here except Stanley. I was so short a time in London and so hurried with those who called, that I had hardly time to hear anything or consider what demands there could be upon me, but I hope to go up to town early to-morrow morning. As the Indian mail goes on Friday next and we have to send out despatches respecting China and various matters connected with it, it would have been difficult for me in any event to have avoided coming to town before the despatch of that mail.

Ever, my own dearest love,
Affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WINDSOR CASTLE,
January 5, 1842.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

The dinner party yesterday consisted of Lord Delawarr and Lady E. West, Lady Sandwich (in waiting), Lord Jersey, the Duchess of Kent, and the usual attendance of the Household. Lord Jersey has gone to town to-day to bring Lady Clementina to dinner.

The Prince after dinner proposed to me to go out shooting this morning. I shuddered at the notion of shooting in a long blue frock-coat and thin shoes, and said I was wholly unprovided with shooting apparatus of any kind. He seemed unwilling, however, to admit of an excuse. The shooting is, I believe, limited to an hour or an hour-and-a-half. I am writing to you after breakfast and before I have seen either the Queen or the Prince. I mean before I have had an audience of either of them.

Lord Hardwicke, Captain Meynell, and Colonel Arbuthnot are to go to Ostend to meet the King of Prussia. The King Leopold will repair to Ostend to pay his respects to the King.

I wish I could stay in my room here, and get rid of some of my arrears, instead of partaking of the Royal Chasse.

Ever affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
January 8, 1842.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

Hardinge said he had seen a letter from Lord Ellenborough from Teneriffe in which he said the finest and best boy he had ever seen in his life was William Peel, our dearest boy.

I have just had a long interview with Lincoln. He sent me two or three excellent letters from his father,

reporting interviews with Lady Lincoln in which she had behaved exceedingly well.

He sent me about two hours since a letter he had received from Lady Lincoln, so becoming in every respect, so submissive, so fully acquitting Lincoln of misconduct, expressing such proper feelings with respect to her own future conduct and the hope of entitling herself by that conduct to access to her children, that I said at once that if I were in this situation I should write to Lady Lincoln by this post and say at once that the feelings she expressed in her letter and the mode of expressing them revived all feelings of tenderness towards her, that I would give her credit for the assurances in her letter with regard to her future conduct, that I would not expose her to the risk of obloquy but would overlook and forget all that had passed.

I said, this is my advice—I am very much affected by her letter and think it very much more favourable to you than any letter of acquittal from her father or mother could be, and that it leaves you at liberty without fear of misconstruction to take the most generous and most Christian part, that of forgiveness.

I saw before I had done speaking that he had come to the same conclusion in his own mind, and that he was greatly relieved by my advice.

There have been such strange events in this affair that I only fear one thing, namely that, after all, Lady Lincoln's letter may not be sincere and that she may even now receive coldly Lincoln's offer of forgiveness and reunion. If she does, his future course will be clear. He will have exhausted everything by which separation and exposure could be avoided. His father has behaved admirably.

I remain all the day in my Library and have only been able to leave it once to go over to the Treasury.

I would not say a word to any one of the children

respecting the subject of the following letter which I draft for you:

"SIR,

I am very much gratified by H.R.H.'s kind recollection of the offer you were good enough to make respecting the placing of the name of one of our sons on Your Royal Highness' list of Candidates for a Commission in the Coldstream Guards. His name is John Floyd Peel. He was called after my dear father whom I believe Your Royal Highness knew, and I am sure you will not think I am too partial to the memory of my father if I express an earnest hope that my boy may be hereafter an equally distinguished ornament of the profession of a soldier.

We were made truly happy by Your Royal Highness' visit to Drayton Manor, and I shall look forward with the greatest satisfaction to a repetition of it.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
with much respect,
Your Royal Highness' faithful servant,
JULIA PEEL."

Ever yours affectionately,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
January 11, 1842.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

We sat in the Cabinet so late to-day that I have not much time to write before the departure of the post. It is nearly 7 o'clock.

Pray speak to Robert and the coachman about the new horse. If it is decidedly unsuitable it had better be instantly returned with the £5 which I believe Villiers agreed was to be paid in case of it not suiting. It came so soon before my departure that I had not time to see it. The coachman is probably somewhat against it as he had not the ordering of it, but still

if neither he nor Robert like the horse the best plan would probably be to return it.

I have lost a paper about the Corn Laws. It is a thick one in a sort of envelope. It was drawn up by Gladstone. It is in writing in several sheets. Will you, my dearest, have the kindness to look in my room and see whether you can find it and send it to me immediately if you can?

Believe me, my own dearest love,
Most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
January 13, 1842.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

This is a wretched day here and it has snowed almost the whole of it. I sincerely hope that the snow did not extend to Drayton, this being the night of the Lichfield Ball. Perhaps it was bad enough to enable you to make a good excuse for not going at all.

After some hesitation and delay, Lady Lincoln has accepted the offer made to her by Lord Lincoln. Their prospects of happiness are very small, I fear. I am afraid from what I have subsequently heard that there has been more, at earlier periods since their marriage, to make him dissatisfied with her conduct. I have always feared a part of her strangeness arose from the mind. She is now in a very excited state and has taken great quantities of laudanum of late. Her parents were well inclined that she should accept Lincoln's offer.

I dined *en famille* with the Jerseys on Tuesday. Fitzgerald and I were the only strangers, and, by the way, there was Lord Granby. The Prince seemed somewhat attentive and Lady Sarah very happy, Lord Granby going on with Lady Clementina, just as *we* recollect him, manifesting, apparently, a great liking for her, but seeming very shy and awkward.

I have sent out no cards for a dinner. I suppose

it is well known by the papers that the leaders in the Houses give a dinner to the official men in each House, the day before the meeting of Parliament, and that they think it quite safe to predict a dinner. The Duke of Wellington gave the Cabinet dinner yesterday. Thinking there would be a hurry if I gave one on Wednesday next, I have put off mine until the next week. I rejoice that we are not invited to stay at Windsor after the Council.

Ever most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

February 1, 1842.

MY DEAREST FREDERICK,

We have returned from Windsor, where the Queen was very civil to us, and the King of Prussia quite charming. He makes himself loved and respected and is so good and virtuous and amiable, very clever and well informed.

You know that the Duke of Buckingham has resigned. No one is sorry but himself. He found himself unfit for office and was glad of some pretext to cut and run. He accepts the Garter, which proves his principles in politics to be the same as the Government's, so that he can never be in opposition. The Duke of Buccleuch as Privy Seal with a seat in the Cabinet is the most excellent appointment and gives unbounded satisfaction.

Everything promises well and goes on well and the Queen is highly pleased, as in truth she ought to be! Everyone has been fêteing the King of Prussia.

Believe me,

Your most affectionate Mama,

JULIA PEEL.

Friday, *February* 11, 1842.

MY DEAREST FREDERICK,

You will have read, I am sure, with proud delight your Papa's luminous, patriotic speech upon

the Corn Laws, and indeed his speeches each night since the House of Commons has sat. His labours are really immense; he is, notwithstanding, quite well, and so are we all.

Julia and Villiers have got, with my assistance, a nice, clean, pretty house in Grosvenor Place, just across the Park, not many doors down from Tattersall's—you know, the great horse dealer.

You will have read about Sara Villiers', now Princess Nicholas Esterhazy's, marriage. All went off uncommonly well. They were first married at the Austrian Embassy according to the Roman Catholic rites, where they had High Mass, and afterwards they were married at St. George's Church.

They are now at Osterley Park.

God bless you and guide you,

Your most affectionate Mother,

JULIA PEEL.

The "beautiful daughter" mentioned in the following letter is now Lady Julia Wombwell:[1]

May 12, 1842.

DEAREST FREDERICK,

Your dear sister and her beautiful daughter are going on most delightfully. The papers had the notice of the birth of her dear child the same day, Wednesday, and therefore I did not write on that day. You are an *uncle*, a great, steady, sober-looking uncle!! We are all so happy! God bless you, and believe me,

Your most fondly affectionate Madre,

JULIA PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
July 18, 1842.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

Yesterday I got a hurried dinner at home,

[1] Lady Julia Sarah Alice, daughter of 6th Earl of Jersey, married 1861 Sir George Wombwell, 4th Bart., of Newburgh Proiry, Easingwold, Yorks.

was in the House at half-past 4 and remained there till 2 this morning. Jonathan wrote to me about an accident which Dr. Baird had had in a chaise. The horses ran away, threw down a boy on a horse and killed the boy on the spot. He seemed to feel it very much. The repetition of accidents in carriages makes one nervous even about your pony carriage and the lethargic pony. *Be always on your guard*, and neglect no precaution.

The accident to the Duke of Orleans seems to have arisen from the postilion taking the horses a road to which they were not accustomed and making them pass the turn which it was their habit to take. The Duc de Nemours will probably have the Regency, and the Duchess of Orleans the charge of the children. This is probably the best arrangement that can be made.

I have seen nothing but deputations to-day, beginning at half-past 10 this morning, and have heard no news. I am writing between the interviews in Downing Street.

Ever most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

PACKINGTON,
Thursday, *July* 1842.

MY DEAREST MAMA,

I was unable to write you a line yesterday, as I wished, in consequence of being at the Meriden Archery meeting during the whole day. The shooting occupied the earlier part of the day, at 3 we dined, and subsequently shot with the ladies, the amusements terminating with a ball. The party here is small, consisting only of Charles and Daniel Finch and Mr. Newdigate.

To-morrow Lords Lascelles and Bridgeman, Lord Bradford's son, are coming here for a day from a private tutor's near Birmingham. Lady Augusta

received a note from Julia Villiers accounting for her absence yesterday. This morning I received a letter from Julia, giving an account of the Banbury races, of which Villiers was one of the stewards. He mentions them as being considerably better than those at Lichfield.

Mr. and Mrs. Dugdale, Mr. Chetwynd, Captain Dilke, Lady Sykes, Mrs. and Miss Wolferstan, were among those at the Meriden meeting on Wednesday, but to-morrow a better meeting is expected.

Believe me,

Your affectionate son,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
Thursday, 6 o'clock, *July* 1842.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

It is 6 o'clock, and I have not stirred from this desk since half-past 9 except for interruptions by persons whom I had appointed on business.

I hope to set out by the 5 o'clock train to-morrow. I will get it to stop at Hampton, where it does not regularly stop. Will you, therefore, have the travelling carriage and a pair of fast horses at the Hampton Station for me by half-past 9.

Ever most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
August 8, 1842.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I saw the Duke of Rutland yesterday in a dark and dirty bedroom on the ground floor at F. Trench's. I was struck with the contrast between it and Belvoir Castle. You never saw such a wretched hole. The Duke was lying on his back, better than I expected to find him. He must have suffered severely while on board his yacht for want of medical aid.

If I call on the King of Hanover to write my excuse

I will not fail to make yours. I should think the House would sit late to-night. I have made our excuses to the Duke of Wellington for Saturday.

I saw the Queen yesterday after her luncheon. I do not believe she is going to Walmer Castle. She will go to Brighton for a short time, but I think certainly not to Walmer.

When you write to Frederick recommend to him, as I have done, to return the visits of those who called upon him at Dresden.

I felt very solitary last evening dining alone, after the House had been counted out.

Ever most affectionately,

ROBERT PEEL.

Tuesday, *August* 9, 1842.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I have this morning received an answer from dear Madame Tooti, who is quite charmed at the promise of seeing us at Upton on Saturday next. I shall travel in the old-fashioned way of our great ancestors, whose judgment in such matters I venerate. Jonathan and his two boys will be there. I will pay as I go at the inns, and if I see a Courier I will show him the ivory knob of my parasol.

I hope you will be as successful with the purchase of the Busts as you seem to have been with the wine. I really hope you weed out our good friend Mr. C.'s Bust and the pictures of Mulready and the tipsy-looking "lord."

The only pens in my possession here are about two new ones, ten stumps, and three all split, so pray bring with you several good bundles. If it were not for vile office I should not be writing now, but indeed in your absence it is the chief pleasure to me to write to you.

Our dear boys are looking very handsome and so happy. They fish and ride and are dear things. Arthur

objects to my proposal that he might wear his jackets now, as no one sees him "in his new tails."

Yours ever affectionately,

JULIA PEEL.

THE COUNCIL OFFICE, WHITEHALL,
August 12, 1842.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

My present intention is to start to-morrow for Wolverton by the 11 o'clock train. I shall reach Upton, I suppose, by 5 or 6.

Secret. The accounts from various parts of the country are very bad. In Scotland as well as in the north of England there has been much violence and great confusion.

If the accounts by to-morrow morning's post should be worse, I may be detained in London, and you will know the cause of my non-arrival and will not be alarmed by thinking of any accident to me.

Graham had made all his arrangements for leaving town to-night and going to Netherby for a few days' shooting, but he has given up this on account of the disagreeable intelligence from the country. If the reports are worse to-morrow, it may be right that I should not leave London.

Graham is to be with me to-morrow with reports.

Ever yours affectionately,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
August 13, 1842.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

Three magistrates arrived from Manchester this morning, confirming the bad account we had received by this post. We had a Cabinet immediately and determined to issue a Proclamation warning people against illegal meeting.

To do this we must have a Council, and we are all

going to Windsor immediately in the hope that the Queen will hold one before she dresses for dinner.

I had my carriage at the door at half-past 10, all ready to start for Wolverton, but waited to see the accounts which Sir James Graham might receive. They were unfavourable, and I was obliged to alter my plans.

My own dearest love, I hope you will stay at Upton till you hear from me again. If the accounts by Monday morning's post are favourable I shall hope to set out for Upton. I cannot help this and am truly disappointed, as I wanted two or three days' quiet very much indeed.

Ever affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
August 18, 1842.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I have gone through all the accounts from the country this morning with Sir James Graham. I think, upon the whole, they are satisfactory. Manchester, Wigan, and Preston are quiet, and Birmingham seems never to have been disturbed except by strangers entering the town. In Yorkshire there is still uneasiness, but if we can put out the fire at Manchester, which we shall do, it will soon cease to blaze at a distance. In the Potteries and other parts of Staffordshire, there have been shameful outrages upon private property. Aylesford has behaved with great good sense and resolution. I saw no symptoms of disquiet at Coventry or any part of the route at Drayton.

I have seen such of the Ministers as were in town to-day, but we have had no news.

God bless you, my dearest love,

Ever affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
August 20, 1842.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I got your dear note, wisely relieving me from anxiety, before I opened it at 8 o'clock last night. I fervently hope that the alarm, by inculcating the wisdom of precautions and by showing that we are prepared, will be of advantage.

The thought that you should be exposed even to alarm makes me most indignant. May God preserve you and watch over you and my dear children!

I have requested some new arms in perfect order and ammunition to be sent to Drayton. We had better say nothing about it. I think one of the rooms in the Tower would be the safest place of deposit. The ammunition should be carefully kept near the arms and in a dry and safe place. One room in the Tower would answer the purpose.

I have written on the subject of these arms. They will arrive on Monday. Our accounts from the country are favourable to-day. There are symptoms of uneasiness at Birmingham, which has been hitherto tranquil. We have taken every precaution.

London gives us some trouble, but we have resolved to prevent all meetings, if we can get notice of the intention to hold them. The Lord Mayor and Sheriffs are acting very cordially with us. I shall come to you on Monday if I possibly can. I have no apprehension whatever that my presence at Drayton adds at all to the danger of attack. Our security must lie in being prepared for it and determined to repel it. I am just setting out for Windsor. Give my best love to all and my blessing. The Queen will go to Scotland unless something very unexpected occurs. We think it would have a very bad effect to abandon this journey after the public announcement of it.

Most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

Sunday, *August* 21, 1842.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

During the whole of this late tumultuous scene and expected attack I felt anxious only to save *you* from an alarm for us, lest you might think things exaggerated. You will know that I never was guilty of a sentimental or ignoble fear. Our arrangements were quickly and vigorously made and should have been equal to an attack from two or three hundred till assistance had come. But then we expected three or four thousand. I am confident, however, that no men actually attacking doors and windows here would have left this place alive.

I sent for Mr. Grundy and desired him to see to the preparation of the supply of water. You see we were armed at all points! I have felt *furious* with the vile mob who contemplate an attack. I received a note last night from Mr. Bonham, who sent us some carbines and ammunition by a most trustworthy person.

When you come from the station do so as quietly as possible. I shall take care not to say when I expect you.

Believe me,
Ever most affectionately,
JULIA PEEL.

Friday morning, half-past 10.

DEAREST DEAREST,

Be quite happy. All is quite safe and well here. We were quite well protected and quite *prepared*, and no harm could have happened to us. I did not move from this and you positively must *not* come. We had, as you will hear, an alarm here last night. Edmund makes too light of the threats, but he seems to have some reason for appearing to make light of the threats.

Ever most affectionately yours,
JULIA PEEL.

In August 1842 the Queen had expressed her wish to visit Scotland. Recent attempts had been made upon her life and the country was in a very disturbed condition. Nevertheless, Sir Robert endorsed her wish to go, and the visit was a complete success.

DALKEITH,
Wednesday, *September* 1, 1842.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

The Queen has not arrived. We expect her now in the middle of the night and I shall probably have to go to Granton, the place where she lands, for the purpose of advising her as to her future moves, I mean whether she shall land immediately and proceed here in the night, or wait until the morning.

There is great ferment and excitement in Edinburgh, but all of loyalty and good feeling. Thousands have come into the City from various parts of Scotland. They seem anxious that the Queen should proceed through the City in an open carriage, that people may have the opportunity of seeing her. I believe the effect of her visit here will be very good in a political point of view, and that it has already done much, by occupying the public mind, to allay that disorderly feeling that prevailed in some parts of Scotland.

This is a very fine place in its way and the rooms are very old-fashioned and comfortable. The garden is of immense extent, close to the town but protected from it. It is a new kitchen garden. The persons here are Lord and Lady John Scott—she was sister to Sir Henry Campbell's first wife—Lord and, Lady Cawdor and their daughter and son-in-law Mr. Balfour, Aberdeen and I.

The people here are very loyal and very well disposed, but they require in return some sacrifice to please them.

Ever affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

DALKEITH,
Thursday, *September* 1, 1842.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

The Queen arrived this morning at 9. Being uncertain as to what time she might come, I left this at half-past 2 last night, and remained at the Pier House. Yesterday was very fine but this morning it rained a little and is gloomy. The number of persons who had flocked to Edinburgh is immense. The magistrates had not given timely notice of the Queen's arrival and were themselves taken by surprise, but the Queen's reception was very good. She passed through the town in an open carriage. So many persons were disappointed that the whole Town Council has been here to-day and I have been obliged to arrange a passage of the Queen from Holyrood to the Castle on Saturday. I went on board the Yacht before the Queen landed.

Most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

Saturday evening, 7 o'clock, *September* 3, 1842.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

We are just returned from a very long procession, which was unavoidable and which it was impossible not to look forward to without some anxiety.

The Queen had to proceed from the place in an open carriage, very much exposed, through the whole of Edinburgh: then to Dalmeny, 16 miles from this, and then in the evening to return by Leith in the same way.

All has passed off exceedingly well, except in the falling down of some scaffolding in Edinburgh, by which several persons have been hurt.

The crowds of persons were beyond description, the progress through the town at a foot's pace and the police arrangements at Edinburgh very defective.

The mob was close to the carriage, from the narrowness of the streets, and every window in every house looking down into the carriages.

Lord Aberdeen and I went after the Queen in the next carriage with the Duchess of Buccleuch and the Duchess of Norfolk. Our carriage also was an open one; ninety-nine out of every hundred were in our favour. The Chartists did what they could by following the carriage to make a hooting and groaning.

It was fine till we got near Dalmeny, but then it began to rain torrents. It became tolerably fine on our return from Leith.

I feared this part of the arrangement, the return after an interval of four or five hours in the evening, and when people might be drunk. But the Leith people were very nearly unanimous in their applause, and behaved very well. It was so wet that Aberdeen and I returned in a closed carriage, in order that the Duchess of Buccleuch might be enabled to close her barouche.

Ever affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

DALKEITH,
Sunday, *September* 4, 1842.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

I went this morning with Lord Aberdeen and Lord Liverpool to the Kirk at Dalkeith; the town is close to the house. The Queen had prayers performed here by a Minister of the Church of England. To-morrow is the Levee and reception. Notices have been given of 1,036 presentations. It is unfortunate that the Queen's route on leaving this passes through those districts in Scotland which have been most disturbed. However, as yesterday passed off well, I hope there is no risk of anything unpleasant hereafter.

This is anything but relaxation from labour and anxiety.

Believe me, my dearest Julia,
Most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

DALKEITH PALACE,
Monday, *September* 5, 1842.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

The chief part of this day has been spent in receiving addresses from those bodies entitled to present their addresses to the Sovereign on the Throne—and in the Levee and reception of ladies.

On account of 2 or 3 cases of scarlet fever having appeared lately in Holyrood Palace it was thought best to have the Ceremony here, though it was very inconvenient in many respects. It was very difficult for the people of Edinburgh to get equipages to bring them here, and of course this house was thrown into confusion. The persons who came passed on much more rapidly than they do in London.

To-morrow we proceed to Dupplin, Lord Kinnoul's, where the addresses from the County of Perth are to be presented, and go on to dinner to Scone, Lord Mansfield's, passing through the City of Perth on the way. The next nights will be spent at Taymouth, Lord Breadalbane's, and the next at Drummond Castle. I shall set out the moment the Queen is on board for her return.

Affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

TAYMOUTH,
September 7, 1842.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

We left Scone this morning and went to Dunkeld, where preparations had been made by Lord Glenlyon for the reception of the Queen. There is no house there, but 600 Highlanders assembled in a

beautiful meadow near an old Abbey and a tent was prepared for the Queen for luncheon. The weather during the time she has been at Dunkeld was beautiful and the whole scene was very striking.

We came on in the evening to this place, Taymouth, Lord Breadalbane's. It is much more striking even than Dunkeld and the preparations have been still more extensive. There have been bonfires on all the hills this evening and fireworks and illuminations, with Highland dancing by torchlight. This is in the heart of the Perthshire Highlands, and the river which runs close to the house, the Tay, issues from a very large lake about half-a-mile off.

The Duchess of Sutherland and her daughter are here, having come from Dunrobin.

Lord Breadalbane is a Whig. His estate is, next to the Duke of Sutherland's, the largest in Scotland. The forests in which are his Red Deer are 40 miles from the house, all the intervening land being his own. I doubt whether there is anything in the United Kingdom more magnificent in point of situation and scenery.

Believe me, my dearest Julia,

Most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

TAYMOUTH,
September 8, 1842.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

The papers, I have no doubt, give very flourishing accounts of the Queen's progress. Everything is done that can be done to please, and there is a certain novelty and similarity about the Highland customs that is striking for a time, but it soon becomes very tiresome. I wish most heartily I was relieved from witnessing them. It has unfortunately happened that every house which the Queen has visited, Dalkeith, Scone, and Taymouth, was out

of order, and immense exertions have been necessary to put things in a proper state. At Scone the Queen's bed did not arrive until the night before her own arrival. There were no steps to the terraces, the rooms were unfurnished and the house about to be painted.

Here there are evident signs in the smell of the rooms and in their appearance that everything has been done within the last month.

I have just left a new room below stairs in which a singer of Scotch songs from Perth is performing, full of smoke, the room being just furnished and a fire lighted for the first time.

Gunter and waiters from London, Taylor and others with whom we are familiar are here, and no expense has been spared to make the reception magnificent, but the time passed very heavily. There are here Lady Mansfield, the Duchess of Sutherland and her daughter, the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, Lord and Lady Kinnoull, Sir George Murray, Mr. Fox Maule, Lord and Lady Breadalbane, and two brothers of Lady Breadalbane, who seems very delicate and tired to death by the preparations she has had to make.

There are other Scotch people, but there are two tables, as there have been at all places through the impossibility of finding room at the Queen's table. I shall be most happy when this is all over.

Ever, my dearest Julia,

Most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

DALKEITH PALACE,
Thursday, *September* 15, 1842.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

We are arrived here after a long journey. We stopped at Stirling to see the castle, and had to repeat the ceremony of walking at a foot's pace through

streets narrower than those at Edinburgh. The swarms of people both at Stirling and Linlithgow were beyond conception.

I must say the operation of passing through these places is a detestable one. My hands are swollen and bruised with having to shake hands on both sides of the carriage with the crowds that surrounded it. It is better, however, than having stones thrown.

Ever most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

The Mr. Drummond mentioned in the following letter was private secretary to Sir Robert, and was murdered, apparently by mistake for him, early next year.

WHITEHALL,
5 o'clock, *September* 1842.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

This letter will be doubly welcome to you and conveys an excellent one from our dear boy. All is quite well with him. He has not had an hour's illness since he left England.

We meet now at 12 in the day in the House of Commons, which hardly leaves a moment for anything.

Drummond came into my room this morning dying with laughter; he said he saw a man in the most extraordinary dress, of brilliant white, and white as a sheet: trousers of the same. He thought the man, from his size and gait, not unlike a Hindoo, as the dress corresponded in colour, at least, more with Indian than English costume. He followed him from curiosity and found him to be that great goose, Towns!!! I have not myself seen him in this strange dress, and know not how much of this report is to be set down to the fancy of Drummond.

I have seen the Duchess of Buccleuch this morning.

The Queen is still full of Scotland, and is quite convinced that I gave her good advice in dissuading her from Dunrobin.

I called for a moment on Lady Jersey yesterday. She was in the act of packing—dressed like a packing woman and in all the agony of string and whitey-brown paper—she wants to know when she is to go to Drayton.

Ever most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

WINDSOR CASTLE,
October 25, 1842.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

There was not a soul at dinner here yesterday excepting myself. I mean no one in addition to the household, Lord Dunmore, Lord Byron, etc. To-day the Cambridges are to come with the Hereditary Duke of Mecklenburg.

The Queen has not seen the Duke of Cambridge and the Princess Augusta since the Duke of Cambridge asked her consent to the marriage, and as this is a sort of marriage party of the Royal Family the Queen said she thought her Minister ought to be present at it, and therefore asked me to come up for the purpose.

I have had my interviews this morning with the Queen and a little one with the Prince, which is to be continued after his luncheon. I saw no one excepting Goldby in London yesterday and I was so hurried with him that I was obliged to make him come with me in my vehicle towards the station.

I have heard no news except that the Queen Dowager has had a fall from her horse, was not hurt in the least, and rode home.

Ever affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

WINDSOR CASTLE,
December 14, 1842.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

The only persons at dinner here yesterday were Lord Aberdeen, Mons. Ribeira, a Brazilian Minister, a Mr. Packenham, just appointed Minister to the United States, Lady Portman, and Miss Paget.

I am returned from shooting with the Prince. He and I went in a phaeton—Lord Morton and Colonel Bouverie behind. We went to a place 8 miles off, with a relay of 4 horses and 2 outriders half way, there and back.

Miss Liddell, who is here, said everyone who had been at Drayton was in ecstasies over the Library.

I have a note from Tooti fixing the christening as you mention, for 12 o'clock on Saturday.

Ever most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

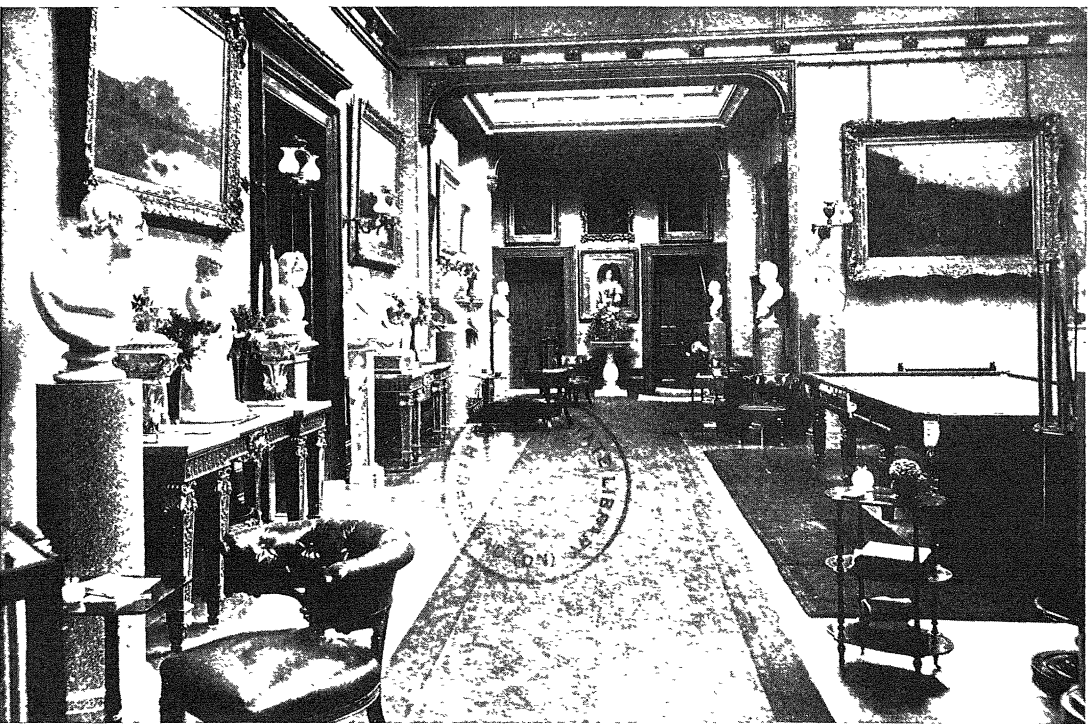
CHAPTER IX

THE ROYAL VISIT TO DRAYTON

In the following letters, bearing date 1843 and 1844, several references are made by Sir Robert to his desire to escape from the almost intolerable burdens of the Premiership to his home at Drayton Manor in Staffordshire. It may here be mentioned that his father had rebuilt the old house which stood upon that site. Soon after the death of his father, Sir Robert had decided to build a new house more in accordance with his conceptions, and the new foundations were laid accordingly in the spring of 1831. Four years later the old house was pulled down, and the new house was first occupied in July of 1835.

A main feature in the house was the Picture Gallery; but, as the collection grew, this was reconstituted, and a larger gallery, known as the Statesmen's Gallery, about 100 feet in length, was completed in 1845.

The total collection numbered 128 pictures, together with eighteen original drawings by Rubens and Vandyck, which had constituted part of the collection of Sir Thomas Lawrence, after whose death they were purchased by Sir Robert. Besides these, was a collection of famous busts, including those of Pope and Isaac Newton by Roubillac, of Sir Walter Scott by Chantrey, and others of the younger Pitt and Castlereagh.



THE OLD GALLERY AT DRAYTON MANOR.

With the exception of two masterpieces by Rubens, the "Chapeau de Paille," or, more correctly, the "Chapeau de Poil," and the "Triumph of Silenus," and of about sixty works of the English School, practically all the rest consisted of the very finest examples of the Dutch School of the seventeenth century. These latter were mainly housed at Whitehall Gardens.

As regards the works of the English School, no less than fifteen of these were from the brush of Sir Thomas Lawrence. Among them was a portrait of the father of the Prime Minister, seated; and another, of three-quarter length, of the Prime Minister himself, standing, with his right hand on a table and his left hand upon his hip, which was painted in 1826. Lady Peel herself was represented by two portraits. One, of three-quarters length, in white drapery seated in a landscape, exhibited in 1825; and the other, so well known in innumerable reproductions, of half length, in a large hat and cloak, exhibited in 1827. Add to these, pictures of their daughter Julia, seated in a landscape, holding a dog, painted in 1828; of Wellington holding a telescope, of Eldon, Stowell, Liverpool, Aberdeen, Southey, and Canning speaking in his place in the House of Commons.

In November 1843 the Queen and Prince Albert decided to make a royal progress in the provinces, and the first place which they visited was Drayton. A few extracts from a contemporary account of the visit furnish a characteristic Victorian picture.

The royal cortège, we are told, left Windsor at an early hour, "consisting of three travelling carriages with outriders, the first carriage being of chariot shape drawn by four horses." The lady-in-waiting

was Lady Portman; the Master of the Horse, the Earl of Jersey; and the equerry-in-waiting, Colonel Bouverie. The expedition, after reaching Slough, "diverged from the main line and proceeded by a cross-country road towards Uxbridge. This road might be not inappropriately described as a lane." Everywhere, it seems, the lower orders "left their cottages and their daily toil to cheer." When Uxbridge was reached "the horses were changed with a celerity which would have struck amazement into the soul of a continental postilion." At 11 o'clock the party reached Watford, passing through crowds, "some of whom looked like farmers, and had come to the spot in gigs." At Watford the train was boarded, and it was noted that the level of the railway was considerably below the platform. Her Majesty wore a black velvet pelisse, and an open-work straw bonnet with black trimmings. It took twenty minutes to place the Royal carriages on trucks which were attached to the train.

Eventually "the rumbling thunder of the train" was heard at Rugby. Here "it was most cheering to see the enthusiasm of the fairer portion of the creation, mounted upon frail gates and rails, and appearing as denizens of the South, rather than cold phlegmatic English." Finally, at Tamworth station, "the velocity of the train ceased"; carriages were waiting; and "Sir Robert Peel accompanied the royal party on horseback" to Drayton, which was three miles distant.

At dinner, which was laid for twenty-one, Her Majesty wore "a rich broché pink silk and satin dress, with rich lace, adorned with a profusion of diamonds and emeralds."

Next morning it was noted that the Duke of Wellington was walking in the grounds as early as half-past 7; whilst presently Prince Albert "proceeded to Birmingham for the purpose of inspecting some of the most remarkable features of that great manufacturing town." At 11 o'clock "Her Majesty, accompanied by Lady Peel and the Duchess of Buccleuch, visited Lady Peel's flower garden and the farmyard and dairy." It was remarked that the only two queens who had previously paid a visit to Drayton were Ethelfleda, the daughter of Alfred, and Elizabeth, on a visit to the Earl of Essex.

Meanwhile, during 1843 and 1844, the great Government, amid multitudinous difficulties and the sharpest recriminations, pursued its way, laying deep and strong the foundations of a better time.

It is true that Greville could note in his diary in June 1843: "Peel is become very unpopular. Ireland is in a flame. The whole country is full of distress, disquiet, and alarm."[1] Yet, on the other hand, as the year advanced, the symptoms began slowly but surely to amend. Thus the Prince Consort writing in October of that year, while pointing out that "in Ireland things are in a very critical state," could also note with satisfaction that "the country is tranquil, the revenue improving, commerce flourishing, and extraordinary activity prevails in the manufacturing districts."[2]

As indicated in the following letters, it may be mentioned that the relations between the Throne and the Prime Minister had become exceedingly cordial. At first, the Queen had said that Peel was so shy

[1] Greville's *Journal of Queen Victoria's Reign*, vol. ii, p. 161.

[2] Martin, *Life of Prince Consort*, vol. i, p. 188.

that it made her shy. This shyness, as Sir Robert used himself to mention, arose in no small degree from the fact that in his zeal for economy, and as Leader of the Opposition, he had induced the House of Commons to cut down the Prince's allowance by a substantial sum. But this embarrassment presently wore off, and was replaced by a warm mutual regard. When an attempt was made on the life of Her Majesty, "the Minister, in public so cold and self-commanding, in reality so full of genuine feeling, out of his very manliness was unable to control his emotion, and burst into tears."[1]

Writing in February of the following year, the Queen could describe him as "a great statesman, a man who thinks but little of party, and never of himself."

One of the chief labours and successes of this time was the framing and passing of the Bank Act of 1844. Of all his measures this was the one of which Sir Robert was himself most proud.

But, as will be seen from these letters, his great and growing difficulty continued to be Ireland, the ill-omened legacy of trouble which had been left him by the Whigs. In a cartoon of *Punch* he is represented as the modern Sisyphus, rolling uphill a huge stone, the head of O'Connell, while the Whigs look on smiling at his discomfiture. O'Connell now resolved to measure himself once more against his old antagonist, and announced that 1843 was to be the Repeal Year. Crime increased, and in 1843 the Government had to carry an Arms Act. The Minister, very far from being satisfied with his own measure, took at the same time two important steps as the

[1] Martin, *Life of Prince Consort*, vol. 1, p. 142.

introduction to a wide scheme of Irish policy. He appointed the well-known Devon Commission to inquire into "the state of the law and practice in respect to the occupation of land in Ireland," the report of which, presented in 1845, revealed to the public for the first time the real state of Ireland. He adopted next, in 1845, a measure for increasing the annual grant to Maynooth, a college for the education of the Irish priesthood, as well as for establishing certain Queen's Colleges on a non-sectarian basis. "The disgust of the Conservatives, and their hatred of Peel, kept swelling every day."[1] Even all this was only the prelude to a wider and bolder policy. For, in offering to William Gregory the conduct of Irish business in 1846, Sir Robert stated that "it will hereafter be a matter of pride to you to be associated with measures of a wide and generous character, which may entirely change the aspect of Ireland to England."[2]

Wednesday, *January* 11, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

The ball went off very well last night. We all left this at 9.45, and on arriving at Tamworth found not a soul come. However, it did not signify. Robert did very nicely and looked like a gentleman, and did his part just as was becoming him to do.

All the children were well pleased and dear little Arthur was admirable. He is a fine little fellow.

I was civil to all and spoke to all I knew. I went into supper at half-past 1, and remained there as long as people wished and returned upstairs to the ball-room. When the men had returned also up-

[1] Greville, *Journal*, vol. ii, p. 277.
[2] Gregory, *Autobiography*, p. 129.

stairs, I, with Frederick and Johnnie, left, and was at home about 2 o'clock.

There was no speaking at supper till after the ladies had left, when Captain A'Court gave a Toast and Robert replied.

I sent the carriage back to fetch home Robert and dear little Arthur, who remained to finish the dancing with a country dance. They came home about 4 o'clock.

Robert has just received a very nice pressing invitation from Lord Newport to go to-day to West Bromwich to shoot and stay there two days, which I encouraged him to do.

Eliza is pronounced quite well and sends you her love. I am come back from Mr. Lane's, who were "not at home" or rather *were*, I believe, for little Arthur said he saw them all at the luncheon table in a bay window very large. As he said, they all "scud" off.

Think of my surprise on my return to find Robert returned. He went with post horses, post haste to West Bromwich, as invited, and found no one there. He says he came back, since perhaps Lord Newport meant Shropshire, but as Robert heard that was 40 miles distant he gave it up.

Ever most affectionately yours,

JULIA PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
January 12, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

My only consolation in this most dreary weather—for we have a snowy, half thaw, half freezy fog—is my thought of seeing you on Saturday. I am very glad the Ball went off so prosperously. I have not stirred out except to Downing Street since I returned to London. I have not had

one moment's leisure from interviews on business and writing letters.

Ever most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,
Tuesday, *March* 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I am obliged to write from the House amidst much noise and interruption.

I desired Towns this morning to write and make inquiry from the head servant of the Duke of Buccleuch and other most worthy persons for another footman.

We are met with a most persevering and vexatious opposition by Cobden, Hume, Duncombe and ten or twelve others to a Bill for enrolling Chelsea Pensioners for the preservation of peace. They threaten adjournment and every sort of factious obstruction.

I much fear this will delay the session, and I am now quite worn out.

I am sadly in need of rest and quiet. What would I give to be with you at Drayton!

Give my love to all,

And believe me, my dearest Julia,
Most truly and affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,
Wednesday morning, *March* 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I again write to you from this odious place where I spend the greater part of the day. I left it this morning at 2 and am here again at 12, encountering the factious opposition to the Chelsea Pensioners Bill. There is an evident determination to obstruct the measure by the extreme Radicals and the Anti-Corn Law League. I suppose we shall be

here till 2 o'clock as there will probably be no adjournment.

There has been a sad murder in Ireland. The adjutant of a regiment shot deliberately by a private on parade.

I can hardly see to write to you although it is noon —it is so excessively gloomy and dark, but I see there are candles in the Lobby of the House.

Tell me how the Portugal Laurels on the terrace are going on. Have they made any new shoots since I was at Drayton?

William unfortunately left Hong Kong just before our letters to him authorising his return. Sir William Parker was at Hong Kong when the Admiralty order came and sent immediately to Amoy to direct William's return to Hong Kong for the purpose of taking his passage to England. We shall soon see him a lieutenant.

Believe me, my own dearest Love,
Your tired but most affectionate husband,
ROBERT PEEL.

The following referred to the birth of Princess Alice:

WHITEHALL,
April 12, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I thought it very hard to turn away from you this morning and that you should go to one home and I to another, on the first day of what are called holidays.

I hope that you have had a most prosperous journey, and that you have found Arthur and Johnny quite well.

Tell me everything about Drayton.

No tidings from the Palace.

Ever, my own dearest Love,
Most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
April 13, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I am delighted to hear of your safe arrival, and that you have not suffered by your journey.

The Duke of Cambridge was here this morning, and said, "I suppose you are expecting a Summons from the Palace every hour." I was in hopes he knew something and had reason for what he said, but I found that it was mere speculation on his part, and that he thought the time was arrived, without having received any particular information.

Aberdeen and the Duke of Buccleuch dined here with Tooti and Villiers yesterday. She was not well after dinner, and looked very pale. I sent to inquire after the dear Child this morning, and have received the note from her which I enclose.

I opened Robert's note to you, fearing he might have been detained by illness.

I have had Bain here all morning, trying to bring the Chaos of books and papers into some sort of order. He seems to have given up in despair, excepting indeed that he has put them on the floor of the Library.

I feel very solitary without you, and very impatient at being kept here. I want a few days of country air, and the sight of something else than Letters and Boxes.

Ever, my own dearest Love,
Most affec. yours,
R. P.

WHITEHALL,
April 17, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

It is 6 o'clock, but I have had so much to do that I have not yet stirred out. It seems an East wind.

Sir A. C. Grant and Bonham and one or two men are coming to dine with me. I am very sorry that

you do not sleep well. I have the same complaint to make.

My first visitor to-day, before 10 o'clock, was Baron Stockmar. He said he thought the Event could not be deferred for "more than a day or two longer." He said the Queen was getting uneasy. I am very sorry for the delay, but I have clearly no alternative but to remain here. It would not be right that the first Minister should be absent from London on such an occasion. It certainly is very unfortunate that I should be detained. I have been paying all the Bills, and getting my own private accounts into some sort of order.

You shall have the packets of seeds. I have ordered them here in the hope of being the early bearer of them. The violet has been watered.

The Duke of Sussex has been very ill, but is now out of danger.

God bless you, my own dearest Love. Give my love to all. I have written you a rambling letter of such news as I have to send you. Lord G. Somerset was the only guest at dinner at the Jerseys', including

Ever, my own dearest Love,
Most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
April 19, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

Alas, no summons. Lord Liverpool has been here to-day, but he had no tidings. It is a sad pity.

I send you a very civil letter which I have had from the Grand Duke, the father of the Princess Augusta's intended.

The Prince said yesterday, when he looked from our Gallery window on the River, "The Palace of Whitehall has a far better situation than Buckingham Palace."

I have your seeds lying in a box before me, and keep them in the hopes of bringing them with me.

Tooti dined here alone with me yesterday. She seemed very well. She expects Villiers to-day. She said Mrs. Villiers had met Lady Jersey at some house where she had called, and had left the room refusing to shake hands with Lady Jersey, indignant that her husband's gambling debts were not forthwith paid. I did not know that Mrs. Villiers was a granddaughter of Mrs. Piozzi (Thrale).

Lord Jersey dined at the Palace yesterday.

My Library is at last cleaned out. Collections of pamphlets and maps and papers, venerable with ten years' dust, have been banished, the carpet is to be taken up to-day, and the shelves of the Library cleared out. My own dearest Love, I wish I was with you. I want a little change of air and scene.

Ever most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
April 20, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

No summons. I was very much tantalised last night. Just as I was going to bed I received a box from the Prince. I had not a doubt that it contained a summons at least to prepare, but to my great disappointment it related to the Duke of Sussex.

The accounts were so bad that he was scarcely expected to survive the night. He is somewhat better to-day, though not likely, I should think, to recover.

To-day seems a beautiful day. My chief enjoyment of it is in the hope that it is giving you health and strength.

Tooti has just been here. Villiers came earlier; she has a cold, but is otherwise very well.

There is a grand purification of the house going

forward. My Library looks fresher and cleaner than it has done for years.

I do hope most sincerely that we may be sent for in the course of the next 24 hours, though I have no particular reason for supposing that we shall.

This is the day beyond which it was thought improbable the Event could be deferred.

Give my best love to all, and

Believe me, my own dearest Julia,

Most affectionately and truly yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
Good Friday, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I went to Whitehall Chapel this morning, and was very sorry to be separated from you on this Holy Day. Tooti wishes to take the sacrament on Sunday in Whitehall Chapel in order to avoid the more lengthened service at her own Chapel on account of the number of the Communicants. I shall take it with her on Sunday.

Lord and Lady Prudhoe were at the Chapel this morning. She is homely-looking enough and very short.

Aberdeen has just been here. He dined at the Palace yesterday, says the Queen seemed very well, stood and walked about after dinner, seemed tired in the evening and went to bed early. But no signs of our immediate release.

What an extraordinary impostor there seems to have been at the village of Drayton, someone calling himself, or, as William says, herself, a son of Lawrence (our brother), knowing everything about Drayton, and all the inmates, and swindling a man of the name of Preston out of £2 10*s*. This person professed to be the boy who was at Drayton some years since with Lawrence and Jane.

My own dearest, your description of Drayton makes my confinement here still more irksome. Villiers and Tooti are to dine with me to-day, and Tooti is to call after her luncheon to-morrow.

I have been trying all morning to lay the foundation for future order among my books.

Give my kindest love to all our dear children, and believe me, my own Love,

Most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
Saturday, *April* 22, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I am just returned from executing your botanical Commission. I found a Stephanotis and a plant which bears a yellow flower, and grows over the house.

It is called an Allamanda and from its other name, which is Cathartica, I suppose it useful as well as ornamental.

The blue companion was not so easy to find. On the opposite side of the house, I hunted out a plant, also given to running about the house and having a *blue* flower. The plant is called Thomiea Learii.

I desired the youthful Henderson to select two most promising scions of these plants, and to dispatch them early on Monday by the railroad addressed to you. I hope you will receive them safely, that they are the plants you wish for, and that they will be good specimens.

Still no call from the Palace. Aberdeen has ventured as far as the Priory, and trusts to be in Town.

Villiers and Tooti dined with me alone yesterday, and Tooti will dine with me to-morrow.

They dined yesterday at the Campbells'. Mr. Hugh was somewhat fidgety as to the success of his feast.

Tooti must take great care of herself. I have

taken her to-day to see Hayter's picture of the House of Commons.

I am sure to-day must be a nice soft day at Drayton Manor. I hope you will be quite set up again. I count every minute of my detention here. Love to all.

Ever, my dearest Julia, most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

I have desired a memorandum containing instructions as to the treatment of the Plants to be sent with them.

WHITEHALL,
April 21, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

The Duke of Sussex died to-day at ¼ past 12. I called there yesterday and met Col. D'Este at the door of the Duke's apartments, at Kensington. He had just come from Brighton, and was unable to see his father before he died. This is unfortunate as they had been on bad terms. Mrs. D'Este has, I believe, been at Paris some time and is still there.

I now *begin to despair*. Monday next the House of Commons meets again. How unfortunate! I see by the papers that the Queen drove yesterday to Kensington Palace to inquire after the Duke of Sussex.

Tooti and Villiers have just been sitting with me. They are gone to Fulham, to call on Lady North, or Guildford, I forget which. I must console myself, unless we are summoned this evening, with the prospect of Whitsuntide. I cannot tell you how I should have enjoyed getting away to Drayton to you and the Children for three or four days.

I still keep your seeds from Henderson's, for to send them would be the abandonment of all hope of being able to bring them myself.

I suppose you have another bright day, with a southerly wind to-day. I think there has been no rain here.

We have rather uncomfortable accounts from Ireland.

Give my best love to all, and believe me, my own dearest Love, most affectionately ever,

Your despairing
ROBERT PEEL.

Tooti says Lord Clifden is to be married to the second daughter of the Duke of Sutherland. They are very young.

WHITEHALL,
Saturday, *April* 22, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

You must not be dispirited by occasional checks to your complete and immediate Recovery. Depend upon it, all will go quite well. Your Constitution is an excellent one. I wish I could have said this to you, instead of writing it.

All hope of my coming to you must now be at an end. If I could have been released this morning I fully resolved to go, if it had only been to spend one day with you, but we have no immediate prospect of being summoned that I can hear of.

I verily believe I should have been called back to town to-day if I had been at Drayton in consequence of the will of the Duke of Sussex. In his will he has expressly desired to be buried in the Cemetery at Kensal Green and "not at Windsor." I have been twice to the Prince in the course of the day on the subject. The funeral of a Royal Duke in the Kensal Green Cemetery with an immense assemblage, etc., etc., is embarrassing enough. Yet it seems hard to depart from a wish solemnly expressed, which is generally complied with. It is the more difficult to

depart from it in this case, because the professed object of the Duke in desiring to be buried at Kensal Green is that on the death of the Duchess she may be buried with him. This could not be if he were buried at St. George's Chapel, Windsor.

We have rain to-day, freshening everything, even here. My own dearest Love, I hope you have been inhaling health. When do John and Arthur's holidays conclude? What can I say about your coming back to me? God bless you. Give my best love to all. And believe me,

Most affectionately yours,

ROB. PEEL.

Sunday, *April* 23, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST JULIA,

I am just come from Church, and find on my entering this solitary but clean house, your dear letter.

The things you kindly sent me, strawberries and potatoes and specially bright and fragrant flowers, came safely.

The Duke of Sussex has, I apprehend, left little or nothing but his Library. The Duchess has shown the greatest attention and devotion to him and never left his bedside. The Duke of Cambridge told me yesterday he had a most painful duty to perform in separating her from the body of her departed husband.

I have been treasuring up to bring you and tell you little stories, an interview or rather meeting I had at the door of his father with Col. D'Este, my accompanying him, riding by the side of his gig, to London. On his telling me he had no one to advise with, and was in tribulation at being refused access to his father, and despaired of being reconciled to him before his death, I advised him what course he should take. A Mr. Walker, I suspect a

vulgar unfeeling fellow, a sort of manager of the Duke's concerns, and one of his executors, told him (Col. D'Este) on the evening of the Duke's death, when the son was pressing to see his father, that the father had given positive orders that he should not be allowed to have access to him. He demanded to have this in writing from Mr. Walker, who had refused to give it when I saw Col. D'E., and it was on this that he asked my advice. He was going home to write a more peremptory letter to this Mr. Walker. I advised him not. I inquired what benefit it could be to him to get a written declaration that his father had given at the beginning of a fatal illness a harsh and unfeeling order, and said that it would reflect discredit on his father, and, as his wish was to be reconciled to him, it would be more dutiful and Christianlike not to have any such order put on record. I asked him, too, whether the world would not say (and I believe say with truth) that his own conduct must have given his father great offence, or his father would not have refused him admission. I asked him if the Duchess had behaved well to him. He said, she had, uniformly. I then advised him to write to the Duchess, and to earnestly pray her to do all in her power to soften his father's heart towards him, and give him an opportunity of bidding his father a last adieu. I told him that such a letter would be more creditable to him than an angry one to a vulgar executor. He seemed very grateful for my advice, and well disposed to take it. His father died that night.

Look out the *Standard* for a mischievous article which I dare say the *Standard* has copied from the *Times*.

I am *dreaming*, but perhaps only dreaming, whether it would be possible for me to come to you by the earliest train on Saturday morning next, and return on Monday, bringing you back with me. It is

something to dream about, in my solitude. God bless you.

Ever, my dearest Love,
Most affec. yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

My best Love to *Mrs. Crusoe*. Can she find a nice pony to bring back with her?

WHITEHALL,
April 25, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

The Event has taken place, and a Princess is born. I received a note from Prince Albert at 4 o'clock this morning, saying I might prepare for a hasty Summons: I ordered the carriage and waited in expectation of the Summons. The Duke of Buccleuch and I were to go together.

At 5 or half-past Sir James Graham called here, and said that it was all over, that he himself had been too late. The Lord Steward, of official people, was the only one actually present when the Child was born. The Duke and I drove to the Palace, found the Chancellor just arrived there, saw the Prince. The Child was brought in to us in its Cot, and we were at home again at six in the morning.

This greatly increases my chance of being with you by 12 o'clock on Saturday, as I believe there is a 6 o'clock train. It is unfortunate that there is something in the House on Friday, a certain Ecclesiastical Courts Bill, on which we expect to be beaten, from which I cannot be absent.

I am sent for to the House.

Ever, my own dearest Julia, most lovingly
and affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

I was to have been in the Chair on Saturday last at the Town Hall at the Meeting for forming a Farmers' Club, if I could have left Town.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE,
April 26, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I am waiting here to see the Prince, and occupy my time by writing my daily letter to you. I think you may certainly expect me on Saturday. I will write again as to the place to send to for me. Perhaps Kingsbury, or, if not there, the Fazeley Station.

I moved last night addresses of Congratulation and Condolence, which were passed unanimously. In the year 1776, on the same day, the *25 April*, Parliament voted an address of Congratulation on the birth of the Princess Mary, the present Duchess of Gloucester.

Everything, my own Love, seems very quiet. I see nobody loitering about. I was not able to get anything to eat till near 1 o'clock last night, being obliged to sit in the House, watching a debate, as if I was hatching an egg, and feel none the better for my long fasting, this morning. I hope you got the seeds, etc., safely.

Ever, my own dearest Love,
Most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
Friday, *April* 28.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I am just going down to the House, and write a line to say that I hope to see you soon after the receipt of this by you.

Will you have a vehicle for me at the *Wilnecote Station* at 11 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Ever, my dearest Julia, most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

You need not send a cart for my luggage, as Charles will probably follow me, or if you send the old single shooting carriage, there will be room for it.

DRAYTON,
Monday, *May* 1, 1843.

MY DEAREST FREDERICK,

Your dear brothers and Eliza live in the boat here, rowing and fishing all day. Little Arthur caught himself, and we nearly ate for our 1 o'clock dinner, the large Pike he successfully trawled for all by himself. It was the nicest fish I ever saw and he was so happy about it.

Your fondly affectionate Madre,
JULIA PEEL.

May 13, 1843.

MY DEAR FREDERICK,

What are the facts of the case, as far as you are concerned, in respect to a subscription for the last election at Cambridge? I was told yesterday that a Club, I think the Pitt Club, had subscribed £100, that your name among others appeared in the subscription list, that a portion of the fund has been applied to bribery of voters, that the facts were known to the petitioners against the return, and will be brought before the Election Committee, which was appointed last night.

I feel very confident that if any improper use whatever has been made of the money it must have been altogether without your sanction or knowledge. But it may be as well that you should let me know what are the exact facts of the case, so far as you are concerned.

Did the subscribers to the fund employ any agent of their own or did they subscribe to some common fund?

Ever affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

RICHMOND,
Sunday, *June* 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

This very old-fashioned house with very old-fashioned furniture is a nice place, so near the river



ELIZA PEEL (AFTERWARDS HON. MRS. F. STONOR).
From a mezzotint after Sir Edwin Landseer, R.A.

on this hot day. I am writing from my bedroom close to the banks of the Thames, with fourteen beautiful swans sailing about.

There is no one here except myself, Aberdeen, and George Hope. Mlle D'Este is staying with the Duchess.

There was an extraordinary affair at the Duke of Wellington's dinner yesterday. The King of Hanover, the Cambridges, and about forty people were assembled at dinner. They dined punctually at 7. About the middle of the second course the folding doors were thrown open and a lady appeared covered with finery and jewels, advanced into the room and stood stock still, in a sort of theatrical attitude.

There was a dead pause of ten minutes which appeared an hour, the company staring at her and she at the company. At last Lord Charles Wellesley went to her—she said she was come to dinner. Was she invited? Of course, or she would not have come. He asked her to withdraw with him. She had come in a very handsome carriage with servants, etc., all *comme il faut*.

Her carriage was gone. He remained with her half an hour till it could be sent for. She said that she was Mrs. Severn, wife of a gentleman whom I remember in Parliament. She said she had received a card of invitation for that dinner to meet the King of Hanover. Lord Charles said it was an imposition on her and begged her to send the card. But this she declined. Her carriage came and off she went. I understand it was a most extraordinary scene in the dining-room.

My own dearest Love,

Yours most affectionately,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
Friday, *July* 1, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

We had another very late night last night and expect one again, making five in succession. To-day members of the Fine Arts Commission have been at Westminster Hall to receive the Queen and Prince, who came at 1 to inspect the specimens of casts and painting done by competitors for employment in the future decoration of the Houses of Parliament. The exhibition with very few exceptions was about moderate in merit.

I think the Queen looked thin and tired. Almost every member of the Commission was present in Westminster Hall: Aberdeen, Graham, Melbourne, Palmerston, Lord John Russell, etc.

Ever most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

July 11, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

The same dull routine—at work at this table all day and in the House of Commons half the night. That is my portion. I have sent my excuse to the Duke of Cleveland. The Irish Debate will continue to-night.

Believe me,
Ever affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
July 12, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

We sat till 3 this morning, but the Debate was again adjourned. It is very wearying and annoying to me.

I have not been to the marriage, nor to the festival after it, and must send my excuses.

I am glad you are inclined to like the new people at the Farm. They must be the wonder of the natives.

We must find you a new pony, or rather horse, but must be very careful that it is safe and quiet, which are the only good qualities left to the old one.

Ever most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
July 13, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

Our Debate finished last night. We have sat up till 3 for the two last nights and I am very tired.

There is an invitation for you and me to dine at the Palace to-day. I was not able to dine with Lord Salisbury yesterday.

Eliza at breakfast to-day was called to my aid to find out one word in your last dear letter, but it has baffled us both. I will show your letter when you come back to me. I wish I could come for you, but there is no chance of that. You know I have hardly been able to get away for one hour, even from this table, for a week past, except to go to a Cabinet, a Council, or the House of Commons.

I am going to the House again now. It seems as if as I was never out of it, so hurried is the interval between departure and return.

Perhaps as I have written in such haste you will have to ask *me* to decipher words in my letter, which looks much more illegible than yours. Only one word puzzles us.

Ever, my own dearest love,
Most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WINDSOR CASTLE,
Wednesday, *August* 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I have been considerably discomposed in all my arrangements by being ordered to stay here to-day, and not only to dine, but to shoot. It was decreed that the Prince, the Duke of Cambridge, Lord Exeter, and I should set out at half-past 9 and go 12 miles to shoot. We are now returned. I shall come to-morrow and Graham is delighted to accompany me.

The Cambridges arrived here last night, bringing, to the surprise of many here, a Lady *something* Somerset. I sat next Princess Augusta, on her right hand; on her left was her intended. When the Princess left the room I was, of course, next him. I found him a very nice young man, 22, but looking older, the unfavourable impression caused by his extreme short-sightedness being a very unjust one.

Lady Exeter is, I believe, at Burleigh. She has never recovered Wynyard.

Towns may put a bottle of Lord Lichfield's dry champagne in ice to-morrow.

Ever affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WINDSOR CASTLE,
Saturday, *August* 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST JULIA,

The party here is Lords Exeter, Liverpool, Delawarr, Jersey, Sidney, Sir Charles Metcalf, late Governor of Jamaica. Lady Canning was lady-in-waiting.

We are just returned from shooting in Windsor Forest, and I am writing to you after dressing, waiting for the Council, which will be immediately after the Queen's luncheon.

The Queen or Prince may want to see me on Monday morning before my departure, and it will be

necessary to have a meeting of the Ministers who are in London previously to our separation.

I am just returned from the Council. Will you, my dearest, give directions for the travelling carriage and a pair of our own horses to be at the Birmingham Station at 20 minutes past 1 on Monday night? Lord Jersey and Villiers seemed much excited in regard to Aug. Villiers' affairs. I have no patience with such selfish spendthrifts.

Ever affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

Monday, *August* 8, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I went out this morning with dear little Arthur for him to fish, and to his great delight he caught seven small perch. Johnny caught about the same and they ate them to-day at their dinner. Robert and Johnny are just going out to ride, and Eliza, little Arthur, and myself are going out in the new landau.

The harvest is being cut about Drayton, and they all say it is fine in quality and abundant.

My dearest, do you remember those large, delicate, gilt balls that we all played with at the Priory? They bounded about as light as a feather, and I believe they are made of slender india-rubber. I should be much obliged if you will get us three or four such balls. And the boys want a regular good cricket ball!

Ever yours affectionately,

JULIA PEEL.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE,
August 8, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

The Prince is gone to luncheon, and left me in his room. I therefore occupy the interval in writing to you.

Yesterday the House of Commons sat very near fourteen consecutive hours; it met at 12 in the day, adjourned near 2 in the morning, and met again to-day at 12.

This is far too much, taken in conjunction with other business, for any human strength.

Does everything look prosperous at Drayton? Tell me about your garden, the roses, the yew hedge, and all the rest. Everything of that kind will be interesting to me. Do the new people at the farm speak English yet?

Towns tells me that the new footman is questionable. But I do not think Towns' judgment as to what constitutes an eligible servant, considering his pet specimens, is a very sound one.

Ever affectionately yours,

R. P.

WHITEHALL,
August 9, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

We have a House of Commons to-day, a Cabinet, and what is worse than either, the Fish Dinner at Greenwich. We embark at 5, and therefore I write to you before the House and the Cabinet.

I am to go down to Windsor with the Draft of the Speech at 2 o'clock on Tuesday. The Council for the Speech will be at Buckingham Palace on Wednesday and the Prorogation on Thursday.

Lord de Grey writes to me that he is very anxious to see Sir James Graham and me on the state of Ireland. I must remain here therefore after the Prorogation. What with the state of Ireland and the state of Wales, which is very bad, and the state of Spain, and the questions that are pending in India —I do not look forward to a very tranquil Recess.

You will have seen the horrid assassination of an adjutant on parade in Ireland by a private soldier

who stepped from the ranks and in the face of the regiment shot his officer. These are most untoward things happening in Ireland at such a time.

I have just got a note from Aberdeen saying that the Duc d'Aumale and the Prince de Joinville suddenly determined to pay a visit of two days to the Queen. They arrive at Woolwich to-morrow.

Ever, my own dearest Julia,
Most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
August 10, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST JULIA,

We sat fourteen hours yesterday, from 12 to 2 in the morning, and made good progress, getting rid at last of the infernal Irish Arms Bill. The Session will not last beyond the 24th—I think that is the extreme limit.

I have just had a visit from the whiskered Bonham, and am not vehemently prepossessed in his favour. A fiercer-looking man I never saw.

Old Bonham told me yesterday that I was deceived by the favourable appearance of the Duke of Rutland and that he was not so well as I had thought he had been.

I am very glad to hear that Juliana has so nice a residence. I wish she could look on it with the additional pleasure with which she would regard it if "son of hers succeeding" were hereafter to possess it.

The lime leaves are fast falling and there is every warning that the time has come when people ought to be breathing fresher air.

Ever, my dearest love,
Yours most affectionately,
R. P.

WHITEHALL,
August 12, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

We had 14 hours again yesterday and met again at 12 to-day (Saturday). Many find themselves disabled by the severity of the labour.

I have a letter from Julia to-day. Villiers is gone to Middleton. I dare say Lady Jersey is grieved at seeing the good fortune of other young ladies, but I think Lord Dalmeny would not have been acceptable to her or Lady Clementina. He is a shabby-looking little fellow. I should not think the prospects of happiness very flattering. I made my excuses to the Duke of Wellington for to-day and shall dine with the Buccleuchs at Richmond, and probably stay there to-morrow.

Ever most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
Thursday, *August* 17, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

We begin to see daylight, though the opening of the discussion yesterday on the Chelsea Pensioners Bill was most unpromising. There seemed every prospect of an intention to resort to the most factious and vexatious proceedings. Three speeches were made consuming four hours for the mere purpose of delay.

We were told that we might prepare for continual Motions for Adjournment during the whole night. A compromise was offered by the respectable Members of the Opposition who had hitherto supported us most manfully. They proposed that we should take the Bill for five years instead of permanently. The Radicals said they would acquiesce in this. We refused, not that the proposal was in itself an unreasonable one, but because such violent language

had been used, such vexatious proceedings resorted to, and because our own friends had so steadily supported us. We had no doubt that our refusal would confirm the small band of Radicals in their determination to persevere.

To our great surprise, however, they ultimately gave way yesterday, and have not renewed their opposition to-day.

I think we shall have the Council for the Speech on Wednesday next and prorogue on Thursday. I am very confident now that we shall not sit beyond Thursday. I could not have borne the fatigue much longer.

This house is suffering from the plague of blue-bottle flies; the hall is strewed with them, all apparently dead.

I received a message yesterday from Lady Jersey, but was unable to see her, having been at the House all day.

Ever most affectionately,

ROBERT PEEL.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,
Half-past 2, *August* 18, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

Again I write to you from the House of Commons. We had a morning's sitting.

We are still continuing our unremitting exertions to get the business of the Session to a close. We have the Fish Dinner to-morrow at Greenwich, a ceremony not very suitable to my taste, but I suppose I must attend. We go down the river in a steam-boat.

We ought to be at a Cabinet which was fixed for to-day, but are all detained here.

Most anxious shall I be to get down to you as soon as possible. I suppose we shall have a Cabinet after the Prorogation to arrange preparations of business for the future, and probably some arrangements will

have to be made for the Queen's absence on her voyage.

Ever, my own dearest love,

Most truly and affectionately yours,

R. P.

WHITEHALL,
August 21, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST JULIA,

I came away from Windsor Castle early this morning. It is now half-past 6 and I have been hard at work the whole day and have not finished half of what I had to do.

The House of Commons met this morning, but I hope we have now nearly concluded all debate.

There was no one at dinner at Windsor except the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch. Lady Dunmore was in waiting, but she does not go on the cruising excursion.

I feel the labour too severe for me, for in the present state of the country, with the combination of the working-classes and the eternal agitation which is kept up, the Recess of Parliament does not bring the relief which it used to bring.

The Labour and the Responsibility fall chiefly upon Sir James Graham and upon me. But in addition to domestic responsibility I must bear my share of that which attaches to foreign affairs. All this never leaves one's mind a moment of repose.

I have to prepare the Speech between this and to-morrow. It is an eternal succession of difficult duties.

Graham and I have had a long interview with Lord Eliot and have dispatched him to Ireland. It is a grievous thing that Lord de Grey should be compelled to leave it at such a time.

Give my love to the dear boys and Eliza.

Ever, my own dearest love,

Yours most affectionately,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
August 22, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I am just going down to Windsor with the Draft of the Speech, and I shall probably be desired to remain there to dine and sleep and to meet the French Princes who arrived yesterday.

Old Sebastiani, who is come, conducts the Princes on a mission from the King of the French. He has just been with me, concerning the deplorable affairs of Spain. Espartero is arrived here.

I will not fail to bring the bust of Fitzgerald with me.

We had a most vulgar dinner yesterday at Sir James Flowers' house—a bad repetition of the Fish Dinner. Eternal puffing of bad wine! But the host is the most remarkable attender in the House of Commons of all the Members. He has dined every day at 2 o'clock, arrived at the House at 4, has never left it, and out of 221 Divisions has been in 211, more than any Member of the Government.

By his dinners he has gained considerable influence, has never asked a favour, and has never voted against the Government. He deserves from me, therefore, that I should undergo the penance of sitting next to him at dinner, and hearing his remonstrances against mixing water with wine.

My own dearest love, my heart is with you. I have been at this table for five hours, and am now setting out for Windsor, not having had time to open one of my letters by this morning's post except yours.

I have not forgotten your footman amid all my occupations. I myself saw a candidate yesterday, and have now written to Lord Colchester for his character.

Ever most affectionately yours,
R. P.

WHITEHALL,
Sunday, *August* 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

The Fish Dinner passed off as well as such things usually do. We went and returned by a steam-boat. Lord Shaftesbury as usual made an exhibition of himself, very indecorous, considering his age and station.

I am invited to dine at Windsor to-day to meet the French Princes. I shall go down with the Duke of Buccleuch.

Will you give directions that Mr. Steell, the sculptor at Edinburgh, should have access to the busts and statues in the gallery and library? He wants especially to see the bust of Sir Walter Scott. He will be pleased to see one of his own busts in the library.

Ever yours affectionately,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
August 23, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I left Windsor Castle early this morning, having been invited to dine and sleep there. The Buccleuchs were there, Aberdeen and the Duke of Wellington.

The French Princes, the Duc d'Aumale and the Prince de Joinville, with two military attendants, were at the Castle. Sebastiani and young Chabot were there at dinner. The Prince de Joinville, who is lately married, is very tall and fierce-looking with his face covered with black hair. He is in the naval service.

The Duc d'Aumale is, I think, a vulgar-looking youth. Both had rather the *ton de garnison* than *de la vieille Cour*.

The Prince de Joinville is exceedingly deaf. The

Duc d'Aumale dined at Neuilly the day we were there. They were very civil, but not near so like a Royal Prince of France as the Duc d'Orleans was.

They left the Castle this morning at 7 to see the sights in London and will, I believe, embark this evening at Woolwich.

I am just come from the Cabinet and about to dress for a Council, both for the business of proroguing Parliament.

We shall sit to-morrow and there will be the final close of this most severe and laborious session.

I find that the papers which I sent and which I did not discover until after a close search are those for which you inquire.

I have a letter from Lord L——. He says he will leave Dublin on Friday. I do not mean that he had determined to leave Ireland altogether, though I have my misgivings as to his return unless he gets better. It is unfortunate that there should be the necessity for temporary absence of the Lord Lieutenant at a time like the present.

The King of Hanover grievously offended Lady Londonderry the other day by one of those speeches which he is in the habit of making apparently for the purpose of giving pain.

Lord and Lady Londonderry were dining with him at Kew with a large party. The King said to her, "This is the very spot in which forty years since Charles Stuart proposed to his first wife. You are sitting for anything I know in the very chair in which she was sitting, and a very fine woman she was."

Lady Londonderry was very sulky the whole evening, and the King seemed to enjoy her annoyance.

Ever most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

COUNCIL OFFICE,
August 24, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I write this from a meeting at the Council Office.

Parliament has prorogued. We met in the House of Commons at half-past 1, and remained there until the Queen arrived about half-past 2. There was no material business and no unpleasant discussion of any kind. Several Questions were put, but I dare say the evening papers will have an account of all that passed.

I expect to have my interview with Lord de Grey on Sunday. Last night most of the Ministers dined with Aberdeen to meet Palmella and Sebastiani. I delight at the thought of leaving London.

Ever, my own dearest love,
R. P.

Tuesday, *September* 1843.

MY DEAR, DEAREST LOVE,

I hope my precious Arthur has had his *first dip* and is now safely and calmly sailing away to the Isle of Man. I am so anxious for him to have all and every benefit from the open sea with just as much tossing as will do him good on an uninterrupted expanse of ocean. I wanted the dear little fellow immensely. How joyous he was at the thought of his voyages.

Dear Jack shot a brace of partridges at Hampton! where I heard unluckily a soi-disant gentleman in the neighbourhood had previously taken the liberty of leaving no more to be shot! Remember the four nice paper weights I asked you for and a thermometer for outside the dining-room, and you want one for your bath.

Ever your most affectionate,
JULIA PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
September 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

Does Arthur look very stout and well and show great improvement since he got down?

Tooti and I went to Whitehall Chapel this morning and received the Sacrament together.

The Duke of Buccleuch and Sir James Graham have just left me, mourning their fate as I am mourning mine. My heart is far away, basking with you in the bright sun on the terrace or dawdling about on your walk.

Steam boats full of people are crossing before the window. It is high water and the gaiety of the scene makes me still more wish to be gone.

Ever most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WINDSOR CASTLE,
Thursday, *October* 10, 1843.

MY DEAREST FREDERICK,

I arrived here yesterday and found an immense dinner party of 80 persons in the St. George's Hall. Very magnificent! and the King of the French looks very well, and greatly pleased with the welcome in England. Guizot also and a most enormous suite of the King's is here. My dearest Fred, pray take care to have our britzka ready at the Brighton Station for me at 4 o'clock, and if you and dearest Arthur like to come in it to the Station to meet me, I shall be happier still. My best love to dear Arthur.

I am,
Ever your most fondly affectionate Mama,
JULIA PEEL.

WINDSOR CASTLE,
October 14, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I am just returned from shooting with the Prince for about an hour and a half in Windsor Park,

a beautiful day, beautiful scenery, and execrable sport. This morning we have every reason to believe the decisive step was taken. I have heard from Graham to-day from town; after some delays the day has been fixed.

I saw Johnny and Arthur last evening, calling at Mr. Coleridge's on my way to the Castle. Arthur quite well again and looking remarkably well and in very good spirits. I think it would be highly desirable to postpone the visit of the baby.

Ever most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
December 9, 1843.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I should have been greatly disturbed if I had chanced to hear of the accident on the railway before I got your pencil note which Baron Rothschild brought here for me. Villiers is thinking of going to Upton. I propose that the baby should meet them at Weedon. I told Villiers you would certainly take charge of the baby if they would send it to Drayton direct from Upton.

The accounts of Lady Graham are not quite so good to-day. Graham says in a note "my wife is much the same. She is very weak."

Ever, my dearest Julia,
Affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

DOWNING STREET,
January 9, 1844.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

It is near 7, and I have come here from the Cabinet, which is only just over. All the members of the Cabinet were present, except the Duke of Buccleuch and Mr. Gladstone, who are on their way

to London. The beginning of all the turmoil makes me feel quite low-spirited. I have not stirred out except to the Cabinet room either yesterday or to-day. I do not care about having any game myself, but the dear boys find some to shoot without injuring the breed of next year. They might certainly shoot, either in the Lower Woods or at Drayton, 12 pheasants and as many hares and rabbits as they can. They might go into the wood called the Alders again.

The Duke of Wellington is looking exceedingly well. I dined at Lord Haddington's to-day. Graham was to have dined there, but his youngest boy has been alarmingly ill.

Ever most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
January 11, 1844.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

It is next week, I think, that the boys' holidays end.

This day 3 weeks all the turmoil of the Session will begin. Even now I can hardly get through the daily business, though I work at it from 9 in the morning to 7, independently of what I do in the evening and at night.

Will you settle with Towns about the movements of the under butler and servants?

The accounts in the manufacturing districts as to the state of trade and employment are very satisfactory. I hear experiments have been made with the smoke of the Bonehill chimneys. I certainly thought I saw less smoke of late. Will you observe it each day and let me know what you think of it?

Ever most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

Tuesday, *January* 30, 1844.

MY DEAREST FREDERICK,

I was very glad this morning to receive your letter. We have a large dinner here to-morrow for about 46 official gentlemen to hear the Queen's speech read, and the Queen in person on the following day will open Parliament.

Politics promise very satisfactorily, and everyone is said to be in good humour.

Read M. Guizot's speech in the French Chamber of Paris! It is said to be very fine.

On Saturday your father also gives his Parliamentary dinner in the Gallery, again to 46—and on the 10th I give a dinner to as many persons, all the foreigners of note and all their ladies, and some of the Cabinet and their ladies.

Robert is still visiting about in the country, and William remains at Portsmouth. I hope you take good food and good nourishment and air and warm clothes.

Ever your most affectionate mother,

JULIA PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
Sunday, *April* 1844.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

Another letter. Brunow has just been with me. The Emperor talks of coming here about the latter end of May, and Brunow left me the enclosed amiable letter from the Duke.

I have left behind me a very long paper on Joint Stock Banks of several pages. Pray look, my dearest, for it and send it to me. It is an immense manuscript. I had a letter from Nesselrode. Foolish people complain of my having said civil things about Russia and the Emperor. What I said has done very great public good.

Ever affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
April 2, 1844.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

Last night we had only a majority of 14 on a very important question. The House was thin, the numbers being only 52 to 38, but the vote was a vote of censure for the opening of the letters of Mazzini—the old Post Office question in a new form. 21 office men, one half of the whole number, chose to be absent.

Villiers to-day gave me a very favourable account of Julia and the baby. Villiers asks me to be godfather.

Ever affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
April 12, 1844.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

Here I am tied to this desk and have been so since 9 o'clock, with occasional visits from Graham, Aberdeen, Lord Lyndhurst, etc. What a contrast with our sunny and happy ride to Tamhorn!

I have recommended the Attorney-General to the Queen to be Lord Chief Baron and Follett to be Attorney-General. Mrs. Buller Elphinstone is wife of Colonel Elphinstone, who was, I think, once aide-de-camp to your father. He is brother to the poor man who was in command at Cabul and is highly respectable. Graham and Aberdeen are coming to dine with me.

I am afraid you must consent to this request of Madame St. Aulaire, as the man is sent by the King of the French. If she will come to Whitehall on Wednesday next she shall have access to the pictures there about 11. I am afraid we cannot refuse as she is a good civil body whom one would wish to

oblige, particularly when she is commissioned to ask a favour for her Royal Master.

Ever, my dearest love,

Yours most affectionately,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
April 13, 1844.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

We have had one Cabinet to-day; several were absent. Our choice for the office of Solicitor-General has fallen upon Mr. Thesiger. I fear he may have more difficulty in getting a return to Parliament. The Duke of Marlborough wishes him to relinquish Woodstock, and he was under an engagement to relinquish it on Lord Blandford coming of age. We have written to the Duke requesting him to return Thesiger.

Ever affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

Monday, *April* 15, 1844.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I return safely your two enclosures. It is impossible not to be charmed with the two letters. It is very gratifying to me, as, of course, it must be to you, to know that you are so justly held in the estimation of great men who can judge without prejudice.

The Grand Duke's and Nesselrode's letters are beautifully expressed and I am sure with sincerity. I enclose a little line for Baron Brunow. How will the King of the French time his visit if the Emperor comes? I saw Edmund this morning. He denounces Lord Ashley's Bill in the strongest terms and said if it was carried it would soon bring utter destruction to manufacturers in this country, and asked me how it was to be reconciled to the truth and that you praised it in such lavish terms. He

said that a compromise about such trifles was absurd. You should resist any alteration whatever. He told me he expressed the opinions of leading manufacturers in Liverpool, Manchester, etc., and all agreed as to the inevitable result of fixed hours or diminished hours of work, and masters had settled in their own minds instantly to reduce wages in view of the expensive increase of the machinery. He said our British trade was ruined! for any new restrictions on trade would be an immense gain to persons trading abroad. Edmund told me he had been getting out of his own trading concerns as fast as he could. He then said that it must be notorious that if any alteration as to hours, wages, etc., takes place the present *Corn Laws* cannot stand at all, and he was aware that Lord Ashley was doing just the very thing the Opposition could wish. I thought it best to repeat this, though I know you are more likely to hear these things put much stronger and better. To-day your House of Commons work begins! I am very anxious about everything and long to hear from you how the discussions are going on.

Ever believe me, my dearest Robert,

Your most affectionate,

JULIA PEEL.

Monday, *April* 1844.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

This is a most lovely day, quite delightful to behold and to breathe. You inquire about dear little Arthur. He is looking so nicely, and has wonderfully improved since he has been home. Dear little fellow! Somehow or other I know how to manage him. It is so happy for me to have them with me and they are all so very loving and affectionate. Frederick looks so much better and even fatter since he came. Freddie rides his old horse and Johnny his own beautiful horse, Eliza her old

stumbling black, Arthur the new harnessed one, and I wander about the park in my pony carriage. The trees are now coming into leaf fast; the air is so sweet and balmy. I saw Edmund yesterday in his room, very ill. He goes on drinking his dreadful remedy, water! and attributes his last attack to having taken a single glass of sherry. There are some fine new young potatoes here, which I wish very much to send you as you are so fond of them, and am keeping them back for you. Also some fine strawberries; not one of them shall be touched till you arrive, but truly if the Queen keeps you 3 weeks more in town what is to be done?

Ever, my dearest love,
Your most affectionate
JULIA PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
Monday, 1844.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I came back this morning with Aberdeen from Windsor, having seen the Prince for an hour and a half before dinner yesterday. I did not arrive there until 6 and he sent for me two minutes afterwards. A Swedish nobleman is here, come to announce the death of the late King of Sweden. The King of the Belgians is gone for two days to Claremont. The Queen and also the Queen of the Belgians inquired very kindly after you.

The Queen of the Belgians asked me about the house at Drayton and said that the Queen had told her more than once that it was one of the best and most comfortable she had ever been in.

My dearest, I have decided not to send your maid. It will be better not to send her along by railway for the first time, just on entering your service. The wise Towns seemed horrified at the thought of her going down in the train.

You ought to be at the Drawing Room next Thursday, but you will prefer on that day to collect your fresh-blown violets and other flowers.

To-day recommences our dreary labour.

Ever, my dearest love,
Your affectionate
ROBERT PEEL.

DOWNING STREET,
June 29, 1844.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

The Cabinet has sat so late to-day that I have come here to write to you, fearing I should miss the post if I went home. I had left out two notes from the nurse at Osterley which I cannot therefore send you, but they were each exactly to this effect: "The babies are well. Miss Peel looks better." I got through my Bank Charter Bill indifferently last night.

I waited on the Prince to-day at Buckingham Palace by desire of the Queen previously to their departure for Claremont. I did not see the Queen.

This has been a lovely day after the rain, though no holiday for me, for the Cabinet sat from 2 until half-past 6.

Ever, my dearest Julia,
Most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
Friday, *June* 1844.

MY DEAR FREDERICK,

I write a few lines to you, altho' I have not much interesting news to send you. William has received his commission of Lieutenant, and he and I dined at the Lord Mayor's dinner on Wednesday last, he in his naval uniform, and I in my deputy

Lieutenant's for the County of Stafford, to which Lord Talbot has lately appointed me.

I am going next week to stay at Col. North's during Epsom races, and as the ball is on the Friday after, I intend to see Johnny and Arthur strutting about in their scarlet coats, etc. There are a great many parties going on, and to-night there will be a magnificent ball at the Duke of Devonshire's.

The Government obtained an unexpectedly large majority over Lord Ashley's Bill for 10 hours, and had it turned out otherwise, as indeed many expected, the Government would have retired. I am sorry to hear of poor Leigh's accident; I hope, however, he may prove not so seriously injured as at first expected. I suppose you have had, like us, no rain for a long time. The country is beginning to suffer, and the barley turning yellow. I hope you are quite well, and with love from Eliza, who is daily advancing in the Polka.

Believe me ever,

Your affectionate brother,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
August 8, 1844.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

We shall adjourn from to-morrow until the fifth of September. Nothing would detain me here but the Tahiti affair. A Cabinet was fixed for Saturday, but I have requested that it may be held to-morrow, before the meeting of the House, in order that I may have at least a chance of getting out of town for a day or two. I am going to dine at the Clothworkers' Hall in the City. I received a note from Lord Londonderry asking us to Rose Bank to meet Count Nesselrode to-day. I have not been able to go there as the House met at 3, and it is now time to dress for the City dinner, which I am very sorry to be obliged to attend.

I am delighted to hear that Arthur is well again, and John approves of the boats which I ordered.

Ever most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
August 9, 1844.

MY DEAR FREDERICK,

Your mama, brothers, and Eliza left town for Drayton on Monday. We have had accounts from William and hope that he will return to England by the *Belle Isle*.

I am afraid you have not returned the visits of those persons who have called upon you since your arrival in Dresden. As their calling upon you was meant as an act of civility, be very careful to leave your name on all who have left their names upon you. This is always done, particularly in a foreign capital. All that is requisite is to leave your name, but do not omit this on any account.

Ever, my dear Frederick,
Most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
September 11, 1844.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I have not stirred out to-day and have little chance of doing so. Arthur has dined before going to Eton this evening. I have desired Hardy to go with him to the station and to see him safely deposited in the railway carriage.

There is a London, not a Drayton, east wind murmuring at the Library window and a gloomy smoky sky.

I have not heard directly from the Queen since her arrival, but Aberdeen called on me on his return to London last night and gave me a message from the

Prince that the Queen wished me to remain at Osborne Sunday to Monday.

My dear Arthur has just slipped in and said good-bye. I am very sorry at parting with him.

We are to start at half-past 8 on Saturday morning, and I shall be conveyed across by the *Black Eagle* to Cowes.

Ever, my dearest Julia,
Affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
Wednesday evening, *Autumn* 1844.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

We may count upon as certain the Grand Duke, Brunow, Mayel, Tolstoi, Agasoff, and Tetenborn. The Grand Duke will remain till Tuesday morning. He is a determined smoker and so are all his companions. He particularly dislikes long dinners and was tired to death at Brunow's. He is simple in his tastes and has no particular fancies excepting to get over the ground quickly.

When do the dear boys return to College? I fear before the arrival of the Russian bears.

We have no accounts from Ireland differing from those in the papers. The troops were under arms nine hours and behaved admirably.

Ever most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WEST NORBURY,
November 2, 1844.

MY DEAR LADY PEEL,

You have received or will, I suppose, receive to-day, 24 boxes of eau de Cologne. I enclose the Bills at Rotterdam and in London for £15, just the sum you are indebted to me. I hope you may find it as good as usual. My old friend, Alexander

Ferrier, our Consul at Rotterdam, has taken some trouble to ensure this being of prime quality, and it is *the* thing, which, when pure, is really worth having. Tell Sir Robert that there were formerly 4 entries on a bottle of eau de Cologne and I believe the aggregate duties were 200% or 300% on the value. I persuaded Robinson to reduce all to one duty of a shilling a bottle and the revenue rose immediately from £200 to £4,000 a year. I am sure that if the duty were now reduced to 6*d.* per flask, the revenue would be doubled, for once in use no one could do without it. I would rather put up with the loss of wine than of it, and yet I like a glass of wine!

Ever yours most sincerely,

J. W. Croker.

CHAPTER X

THE CRISIS

WITH 1845 the crisis and the climax in the life of Sir Robert Peel began to approach.

In the spring of that year the Minister undertook two momentous measures. The first was to send, in his own phrase, "a message of peace to Ireland," in the shape of his new Irish measures already mentioned in the preceding chapter; and the second was to introduce and pass his second Free Trade Budget. The former Free Trade Budget of 1842 had proved so exceedingly successful that now, on the basis of the invaluable experience thus gained, no less than 522 import duties were repealed, with the avowed object of furnishing "a new scope to commercial enterprise, and occasioning an increased demand for labour." These two measures inevitably created intense indignation against him in the ranks of the party.

Nevertheless, though the conflict was so arduous and the labour almost too much for the strength of any man, the iron resolution and the overwhelming knowledge of Sir Robert triumphantly won its way against all obstacles. The session closed in the second week of August. "The session of Parliament," writes Greville, "has ended, leaving Peel quite as powerful, or more so, than he was at the

beginning of it. The Whigs see no prospect of coming into Office; the Tories hate, fear, but do not dare oppose him."[1] Similarly, Cobden said at this date that neither the Grand Turk nor a Russian despot had more power than Peel, who himself told the Princess Lieven that he had never felt so strong or so sure of Parliament.

Yet, even as these thoughts were being spoken or recorded, those rains of July had fallen that were to rain away the Corn Laws. In England the harvest had been spoilt; in Ireland the disease of the potato crop had appeared. Starvation faced the country. Yet the Corn Laws, the last bulwark of Protection, still stood upright and unimpaired. Famine made by law had to be swept away for ever.

It would be quite beyond my purpose to enter into the question of the Repeal of the Corn Laws, or to array the arguments on either side. Enough to note, in order to elucidate the following letters, the sequence of the events which now befel.

It was in August 1845 that the reports reached Sir Robert of a formidable disease which had attacked the potato crop in the Isle of Wight. In September anxiety deepened into alarm, when the disease was also found to be prevalent in Ireland, about one-half of whose population was dependent upon that crop. To avert famine in Ireland, a large importation of wheat would be necessary. But in Great Britain itself as well as in Europe the wheat harvest was bad. A grand object-lesson had arisen to show us that our only safety lay in open ports.

During August, September, and October Sir Robert collected information upon the impending crisis, with

[1] Greville, *Journal*, vol. ii, p. 290.

feelings of which Wellington said, "I never witnessed in any case such agony." For, as Guizot had observed in 1840, it was the condition of the working classes upon which centred the thoughts of Sir Robert Peel.

On October 15 the time of deliberation bore fruit in conviction, for on that day he wrote: "the remedy is the removal of all impediments to the import of all kinds of human food—that is, the total and absolute repeal for ever of all duties on all articles of subsistence."[1] From October 31 to December 5 he endeavoured to carry his colleagues as a whole with him, but having failed in that object, he resigned on December 6. Lord John Russell having failed to form a Ministry from the Whigs, and Lord Stanley, the head of the Protectionists, having declined also, Sir Robert accepted and resumed Office on December 20, 1845. He said to the Queen, "I will be your Minister, happen what may." To another correspondent he wrote: "it is a strange dream; I feel like a man restored to life." Like another Ulysses, he alone could seize and string the bow.

Parliament met in January 1846, and Sir Robert introduced his measures. His friends were astonished to observe how, in that extreme crisis of his fortunes, the spirit and energy of youth revived within him. All but 120 of his followers announced their intention of disowning him, but these latter may be termed the flower of his party. In a series of his greatest speeches, delivered on January 22 and 27, February 9, March 27, and May 15, he ex-

[1] *Memoirs*, part iii, p. 121.

pounded the theory and practice of Free Trade. The third of these is probably almost his greatest speech, and its peroration contains the passage opening with the words, "this night you will select the motto which is to indicate the commercial policy of England."

On the other hand, there is probably no parallel in our political history to the fury with which he was assailed. Writing on February 16, 1846, the Prince Consort observes, " Here we are in the middle of the Corn debate. Peel is abused like the most disgraceful criminal. He shows boundless courage and is in the best spirits; his whole faculties are roused by the consciousness that he is at this moment playing one of the most important parts in the history of his country." On one occasion the Protectionists refused during some five minutes to allow him so much as to begin his speech.

On another night in May they screamed and hooted with shouts of derision and gestures of contempt, and for a minute or two he was entirely overcome. Yet still he pressed onwards, striving, as it were, to outpace the awful advent of famine in Ireland. In spite of everything, his measures passed the House of Commons.

On June 25, 1846, the Speaker rose amid profound silence. He announced that the Lords had agreed to the Customs Duties and Corn Importation Bills without amendment. At last, after a five-months' struggle, the Minister had won! Then, even on that very night, his ministerial soul was required of him. All parties seized the occasion of an Irish measure to combine against him and to defeat him. Thus it was from Ireland that his summons came.

WHITEHALL,
February 2, 1845.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

On my return to Whitehall I found a note from the Queen saying that the Prince was very desirous to see me, and proposing that I should dine and sleep at Windsor to-day.

What a sad pity! The last day before the recommencement of the House of Commons and when every moment of to-morrow morning is precious to me.

A thousand thanks for the violets which I had on my breakfast table this morning; a sad contrast to my blue boxes and much to their disadvantage.

Ever most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

Monday, *February* 3, 1845.

MY DEAREST FREDERICK,

Everything here concerning the Cabinet and Government is most satisfactory, and all promises well. To-day your father gives his first official dinner to thirty-eight official Members of the House of Commons, at which he reads to them the Queen's Speech. On Saturday next I have a great dinner to forty-three of the great official personages and to all the foreign ambassadors and ambassadresses.

Johnny is here, a great comfort to me, and he is well drilled every morning at the barracks. He looks so nice in his uniform!

Ever your most fondly affectionate Madre,
JULIA PEEL.

WHITEHALL GARDENS,
Friday, *June* 13, 1845.

MY DEAREST FREDERICK,

I am so glad you are enjoying the charms and happy delights of Drayton. I trust you will become

quite strong. I read with infinite interest all the welcome details of our dear home. I may say with the great Irish poet, Moore, that "in dreams I re-visit" it, and I hope, as soon as you tell me of the ripe fruits and roses in bloom, to come down myself.

We are this day returned from Windsor. We yesterday all attended the Queen in state to the Races—8 state carriages having each 2 outriders in scarlet in front, 2 footmen behind on the carriages, and again 2 outriders behind each state carriage. We got back to the Castle at 6 o'clock; a long day and a broiling one. On the first evening the Queen had a dance, a ball, in which your Papa and I, Lord Aberdeen and Colonel B. Drummond, an immense man, all danced. Besides, Lady Delawarr and Lady Jersey. We all danced Sir Roger de Coverley and country dances and the minuets up till 1 o'clock. I saw Julia and Villiers a moment, who drove down to Ascot. A piece of silver plate, which the Emperor of Russia gave to be run for, was magnificent, standing about a yard high, surmounted by the equestrian statue of Peter the Great. Lord Albemarle won it.

I saw dear little Arthur at Windsor: he came up to see me yesterday at the Castle, whilst I was dressing for dinner. He looks and is quite well.

Believe me, your most fondly affectionate Mama,

JULIA PEEL.

Tuesday, *June* 17, 1845.

MY DEAREST ROBERT,

I hope that you are now truly enjoying the delights of sweet Drayton Manor, the place of all I love best. I am just longing to come, but am just starting to the Grand Fête given to all the Royalties by a Mrs. Lamena—a lovely day, too hot to please me. I am going to-night to Mrs. Philipps, the wonder of conjurers. Johnny went yesterday at 6 o'clock in the morning to Eton, intending to fish

but contented himself with rowing about the Thames for 5 hours!

O'Connell was in the House of Commons last night, *not* violent at all, though he said he intended to be furious! The Maynooth Bill has passed, and all your Papa's Banking Bills also.

Your most affectionate Mama,

JULIA PEEL.

Saturday, *June* 20, 1845.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

Now that the arduous conflict is at an end, I pray God in His mercy to give us comfort, happiness, and prosperity in our dear home and in our family.

How chequered with troubles, anxiety, and toil have been the past years! What a wearisome task you have had and for what a very thankless party! I am more anxious than I can express for you to come home. Why should I not come up to town? I wish you would send me a note as a parcel and let me come up *at once*. The last week's anxiety and distress has really been too much for me, as now we are separated I thought only of what was painful. I wish you would let me come at once.

God bless you, my own dear love. I will be in town the first thing on Monday and we will come back together here.

Ever your own most true and affectionate

JULIA PEEL.

Monday, *September* 15, 1845.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I do not know well what to write, but of one thing you must feel as sure as I feel, which is, if my presence is any comfort at all I am not only ready but anxious to return to town to you. You have

but to say, and I alone will come up the same morning on which I receive your acceptance of me. I can do so quite comfortably and joyfully. The children are established, and during our absence I am sure all things with them cannot now fail to go safely. I can come in the morning if you will let me. Pray say as *you* like. I shall like to come to you, and Frederick can come here to take over charge of this.

I had a visit whilst out walking this morning from Miss A'Court. She stayed here till I and the children returned. She makes me unhappy by all she repeated to me as to Lord Heytesbury, Dugdale, Lord Howe, and others. She said Captain A'Court would never again stand, and she heard other Conservatives say all sorts of disagreeable things. I heard from her also of the horrid personal abuse of the newspapers. Really such feelings and language are un-Christian.

I enclose you a note I had to-day from Lord Talbot, which you may burn when read, as I have answered it. I suppose he also is against us. Pray tell me who of the Cabinet are of a different opinion from you.

I did not know that Sidney was adverse, and Miss A'Court said he had said to several people who told her that he differed from you. I said in perfect truth I never heard, and really had never heard a word, and, of course, could know nothing. I am perplexed, and, of course, distressed. I can only desire that state of things which can be considered for your high credit and honour. I care for *nothing else.*

God bless and guide and protect you in all things. Did you see, as I did, the account of the mutiny at Chelmsford? Mr. Rown and those who spoke must be devoid of a Christian spirit.

What is the letter from the President of America?

I am quite aware that you cannot leave town just now till affairs are arranged.

Ever believe me, my own dearest love,
Your most affectionate
JULIA PEEL.

DRAYTON MANOR,
Sunday, *September* 21, 1845.

MY DEAREST FREDERICK,

We are all very sorry to have lost your company, but are consoled by the hope that Brighton will lay the foundation of the complete establishment of your health. I shall be very glad to hear from you. Do you think that you have already benefited by the sea air? Are you comfortably settled and have you everything you want? I had a few lines the other day from Baron Brunow saying that he had heard you were at Brighton and was just setting out in search of you. Our party leaves us to-morrow. Count Dentrich and Count Pollen are very determined sportsmen, requiring the chasse every day.

We have had the Villiers and Sir Stratford, Lady, and Miss Canning.

The Entente Cordiale with France is in great jeopardy from what has occurred at Madrid in respect to the Spanish marriages. I can hardly believe that the double alliance will take place.

I think Louis Philippe will find that the public indignation in Spain will more than counterbalance any advantage he can hope to obtain from the marriage of his son to the Infanta.

All send you their fondest regards.

Believe me,
Ever your most affectionate father,
ROBERT PEEL.

WINDSOR CASTLE,
October 11, 1845.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

There was no one at dinner here yesterday excepting Sir Edward Codrington and Sir W. Fremantle.

The Duchess of Kent indeed dined here as usual. We were driven in from some very indifferent shooting by worse weather and got pretty nearly wet through.

The Queen said that Queen Adelaide was coming here to spend a week. I see in the corridor that the carpet is such a one as that of which we were talking —a red ground speckled with black—very like our own in the old gallery and in Whitehall Chapel. I see also that there are oblong seats in the corridor of carved oak, very low; the Gothic pattern of carving. They are covered with scarlet cloth, each with a large scroll extending the whole length, the scroll being in white, a very ornamental pattern.

I rejected some *horrors* which Dowbiggin brought to Whitehall and told him to bring the remainder to Drayton next week.

Ever most affectionately yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

WINDSOR CASTLE,
October 12, 1845.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

Prince George said to me last night that he longed to repeat his visit to Drayton—that when he was last there it was not finished. I said that we should be delighted to see him. He was not content with a general invitation, but I dare say that if he shoots this morning he will bring me to closer quarters. He said last night the time probably would come after the 30th of October—the day after the Queen's visit to Lincoln's Inn. He evidently longs to come.

I had a walk with dear Arthur on Saturday. He is quite well, full of his grand matches at football, which are to take place this week, in which he is to play, and on which the eyes of the world are supposed to be set.

Coleridge gives an excellent account of him.

My visit was a very opportune one. The late member for Windsor is dead and an election is about to take place. Old Walter of the *Times* wishes to come in, but I hope I have made arrangements which will prevent this, and ensure the return of a good Conservative.

Yours most affectionately,
ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
December 13, 1845.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

To this hour I have heard nothing positive. It is just 4. Lord John was to go to Windsor at 4 and to convey his answer to the Queen.

The general impression, I think, is that he will decline. I hope you arrived quite safe and well. I am very sorry to lose you in this state of turmoil and anxiety—but am sure it is better for you and particularly the children to be in the country.

I shall miss you at dinner and in the evening and at night very much.

God bless you.

Most affectionately yours,
R. P.

WHITEHALL,
December 15, 1845.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I know nothing more. I suppose to-morrow or the next day Lord John will finally decide on his course.

Alas! my prospects of coming soon to you are not very bright.

If he declines, there will be new turmoil—if he accepts, some day must be fixed for our giving up seals, etc. If that is not a very early one, I shall hope to come to you. But of course nothing can be decided until Lord John's resolution be known.

I have a strong persuasion, that whatever may now happen, there cannot be a long interval before we shall be together without such interruptions to peace and happiness as there have been for the last four years.

R. P.

WHITEHALL,
December 16, 1845.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

I am deeply sensible of the affection and kindness of your letter.

We had better determine nothing until this suspense is removed.

I think it highly probable that it will be determined to-day whether Lord John will, or will not, undertake the formation of a Government.

It is now 6 o'clock and I have not a rational guess as to which side he will incline.

I hear just as many rumours that he will accept as that he will not undertake it.

Of course, we must be prepared for the gross injustice of people condemning before they have heard one single word. How can those, who spend their time in hunting and shooting and eating and drinking, know what were the motives of those who are responsible for the public security, who have access to the best information, and have no other object under Heaven but to provide against danger, and consult the general interests of all classes?

There are all sorts of perfectly false reports.

There cannot be a better specimen of these than that which Miss A'Court had heard, that Sidney had been vehemently opposed to me. What is the truth? He has been cordially and zealously with me from the first to the last.

I am perfectly at ease in my own mind and conscience. Not only have I acted with the best intentions—but firmly believe that that which I have done is the best that under the circumstances could have been done.

As to newspapers, every malignant and malevolent fellow who has been disappointed can write an article with a pompous *We*, as if he was speaking the public voice.

God bless you, my own dearest Love.

I sincerely wish that the issue of all this may be that the first place we meet shall be at Drayton.

Ever most truly and affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

Thursday, *December* 18, 1845.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

This day like yesterday is wrapped in a dark drizzling rain, which prevents stirring out. There is, however, excellent exercise in the new picture gallery and houses. I read the papers till indeed *all my courage fails me*, when I know that in any event you only expect "increased trouble and anxiety." I assure you I feel shrouded in gloomy and painful perplexity. I only honestly ask one thing. Will you assure me that at least you are confident of triumphantly *proving* (of course I know you can do so) your own highmindedness and high principles? Will the justice, wisdom, and uprightness of your intentions and of your conduct be manifest? Will praise or justice be awarded you in place of so much cruel abuse? If all this, I may again be at ease. Alas! I now believe in Fate! I must make up my mind

to a troubled one. I care for *nothing*, but will the bitterness of friends, so called, and of enemies, be forced to yield in your favour, when the opportunity arrives for you to explain all things? I am at times too much overwhelmed, at others I summon all my courage and pride, and, above all things, I rest my hope and confidence in God. May He direct you in all things and preserve you; and though I am but a poor reed, rely upon me for the truest support and affection.

I am, ever yours affectionately,

JULIA PEEL.

Friday, *December* 19, 1845.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

This day like yesterday is a bad one and it pours hard. I am all anxiety for the news to-morrow.

I return you Guizot's letter, and I enclose you one I have from Lady Jersey. As I have not a shadow of information to give her and have no wish to be quoted for one word, I do not intend to write to her. I hope you will continue well, and indeed that we may be happier than we have been and are now. I trust all will be for the best. I am out of spirits and cannot entertain anyone here. I am obliged to Mr. Murray for sending me his beautiful illuminated Prayer Book. I am sure it is superior to all.

The book from Bain is here. Julia sent me a note she received from Robert saying how glad he was to have heard that she was again quite well, but not a word of his return.

I have just seen Edmund, who says that he read in the *Times* to-day that Lord John had offered you support in the pending great question "which was declined" and he and his party are therefore now "the Government." Edmund said that the funds keep falling, and great alarm prevails in Manchester, etc. I long to hear something consoling from your

letter to-morrow. Dearest Robert, I am so anxious and uneasy.

Ever believe me,
My own dearest Robert,
Your most affectionate
JULIA PEEL.

Saturday, *December* 20, 1845.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

This is perhaps not a time when I may give expression to my deep regret and disappointment at the unexpected turn of affairs. Under the circumstances, you could not act otherwise! But my cherished hope is gone! Strange Fate! I fear, however, that your difficulties are many and very conflicting. I am, of course, all anxiety to know how you can arrange as to the Cabinet and your *measures*. Edmund tells me that a private letter from Lord George Bentinck states that Lord Grey refused to sit in the same Cabinet with Lord Palmerston as Foreign Secretary and requested Mr. Cobden to be in office!

Since I came here I have several times refused to see General A'Court, knowing his gossiping propensities. However, after Church he found me and being "very urgent" to speak to me I saw him. First he showed me two letters, one to you and one to his constituents, under the belief of immediate dissolution of Parliament, stating that he could not again offer to stand. He asked my advice as to whether to send you those letters, as he said the papers yesterday said the Queen had sent for you to resume the Government.

He concluded there would not be a dissolution and asked whether he should destroy or send the letters to you; Captain A'Court expressly stating that, if things remained as they were, his letters were to be destroyed.

Then he told me a long story of an agricultural meeting, I think at Birmingham, when a most violent and personally abusive resolution was drawn up, declaring, amongst other things, that the country had lost all confidence in you. Dugdale refused to sign this unless the expressions were less offensive. After some discussion they were a little softened, though, as the General said, violent and abusive. Now the resolution is milk and water to what it was, and subsequently Dugdale signed it. It seems the General was requested by Dugdale to explain that he did not sign the most violent resolution.

Now I freely say that I for one do *not* thank him for his protective exercise of mercy!! I see no difference.

The General said he had reason to know that Mr. Newdegate drew up the offensive document. He told me more, but I am weary of strife.

If you cannot come here, as I foresee that you cannot, why do you not let me come up to you? I hear that the horrid Mr. Ricardo has no limit to his foul language. I am so pained at all this. Perhaps Frederick had better come here to take charge of Johnny and of Arthur and I bring up Eliza with me. How shall we arrange?

I am so sorry that Lord Talbot and Lord Howe, etc., should be so alarmed at your supposed measures.

Ever, dearest Robert,
Believe me,
Your own most affectionate
JULIA PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
January 1846.

MY DEAR FREDERICK,

You had better see Ballard and settle with him which covers should be beat on each of the two days. The best might be taken on Monday, as there

is sure to be your party on that day. All the covers about Drayton may be beat on the 2 days, making such a division as may be thought most convenient.

Give my love to John, Arthur, and Eliza.

Affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
January 9, 1846.

MY DEAR FREDERICK,

I think the best plan will be for you to come on Monday, you, Eliza, and Arthur, in the coach by the 9 o'clock train.

Tell my dear Johnny he may stay a few days longer until he hears from us again. I will send Towns and Marsh (your mama's maid) to Drayton to morrow to superintend packing up.

Let Eliza's maid come by the earliest train she can to-morrow to wait on your mama on Sunday during Marsh's absence. Bidford, the under-butler, will be ready to come when Towns tells him.

Most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

CAMP, SULTAN-POOR,
March 19, 1846.

MY DEAR LADY PEEL,

I am delighted to receive your kind note. To receive the smallest recollection in this strange country, and amid these wild scenes, has a happy effect upon a man's spirits. It carried me back twenty years, and I remembered, under all the trials of so many eventful years of political and private life, that you have never been a fair-weather friend to me and mine, but always the same under every varied circumstance. These thoughts of Drayton and its dear inmates, so roughly contrasted with this camp and its followers, brought back a thousand recollections of kindnesses received and never for-

gotten, and a confident trust that I shall have the happiness of telling you so under your own hospitable roof, when I hope our friend Sir Robert will have mastered all his difficulties and have secured that refuge from toil which would have destroyed any other man.

I have had the little Maharajah of Lahore in my camp, a boy of eight years of age, very pretty and a very brave little fellow. It is impossible not to take a great interest in his fate—his chances of reaching manhood are, I fear, against him, but we are doing all we can to support him, although I have been obliged to give Cashmeer and a large tract of country to the Talleyrand of the East, Raja Golab Singh, having three days ago ratified a treaty in full durbar, making him King over as large a country as Nepaul.

Charles and Arthur are quite well. The former has made some very good sketches of the most remarkable scenes. I hope shortly after you receive this note that Lady Emily will be on her way to England. Give my affectionate regards to Eliza, and all your family circle, and believe me, dear Lady Peel,

Ever yours with the most faithful friendship,

HENRY HARDINGE.

WHITEHALL,
April 6, 1846.

MY DEAR COUNT ST. AULAIRE,

I am much obliged by your attention in sending me a copy of the recent speech of M. Guizot on the subject of the commercial policy of France.

I am very sorry to find that there is so little prospect that the voluntary relaxations on our part of Duties on important articles, the produce of France, will be met in a corresponding spirit by the French Government and legislature.

I had hoped that we should have been encouraged, by the following of our example in France, to pro-

ceed in a policy which would have confirmed the amicable relations of the two countries by extending their commercial intercourse.

The speeches of the Minister of Finance and of M. Guizot will be triumphantly quoted in the House of Commons by my opponents as a proof that we receive nothing from the French Government, excepting fair words, in return for our commercial liberality towards France.

We have many relaxations yet to make in our remaining Duties on foreign produce and which I would at once propose if I were not debarred from so doing by revenue considerations. But certainly after the announcement in the French Chambers I shall select for future experiment those articles of foreign produce which we import from countries that are willing to reciprocate our liberality.

I cannot of course presume to question the perfect right of Ministers of France to consult the interests of France in framing their commercial policy. But I must with all due respect express my dissent from their doctrine that it is for the real interest of France as a nation to tax the consumers in France for the personal advantage of a comparatively few manufacturers of such articles as hardware or cotton or linen goods.

The time will come, however, when in France as in this country the welfare of the great body of people—that is, of the consumers—must be consulted.

I have the honour to be, etc., etc.,

ROBERT PEEL.

WHITEHALL,
August 3, 1846.

MY DEAR LORD JUSTICE CLERK,

I am much gratified by your letter, though it does not surprise me that the course which I have pursued for the purpose of averting serious danger from the aristocracy, of adjusting in the time of

tranquillity, when they could be adjusted, questions that brook no delay, and of recommending to the confidence and attachment of the People the institutions by which they are governed—should have met with your cordial approbation.

This is the true Conservative policy—but gentlemen who call themselves Conservatives will be content with nothing but that their own passions and sordid interests should be the rule of a Minister's conduct.

If they could judge of their own interests there might be some show of reason in this, but it is too much to require that a man, in spite of his own convictions, should lead the country on to ruin.

Protectionists indeed!! to close their eyes to the result of every commercial experiment that has been made—to find every one of their predictions falsified—to disregard the state of public opinion—to call the Corn Laws a Labourers' question, and yet listen to the appalling facts as to the condition for years past of the labourers in Dorsetshire and the more purely agricultural districts—to be willing to encounter the tremendous risk of two bad harvests and the recurrence of such a state of things in Paisley and Stockport as was witnessed in the winters of 1841 and 1842—not to see that the Corn Laws would, in such an event, be swept away with dishonour on the demand of a starving population—this is to be a *Protectionist*!

Thank God, I am relieved for ever from the trammels of such a party!

I think I can satisfy you as to the decision to which I came *not* to dissolve. I would have dissolved, I would have done anything to carry the repeal of the Corn Laws. I had put my hands to the plough and could not have looked back.

But the Corn Laws were repealed without the necessity for dissolution.

Dissolution after the repeal of the Corn Laws might have given me a majority. But that majority would have consisted in great measure of men of democratic principles, approving of my conduct as to the Corn Laws, sympathising with me on account of the calumnies and shameful injustice of my opponents—but with no other bond of political sentiment between us.

I am a Conservative—the most Conservative act of my life was that which has caused the sacrifice of power. I was not prepared to unite with opponents from whom I differ or to exist as a minister by support on sufferance. Depend upon it, dissolution by me, following immediately the repeal of the Corn Laws, must have ranged the ministers of the Crown and the Radicals under the same banner at a General Election. The avowed union would have been better than secret unavowed concert; I am prepared neither for one nor the other, and therefore I preferred resignation to the maintenance of power (through dissolution) on a hollow ground.

I think I know something of the feelings and opinions of the middle classes in Great Britain. But I confess to you I had under-rated the extent to which detestation of the Corn Laws has pervaded the mind of Scotland. I know this now by the daily receipt of addresses, prompted by feelings which no one can mistake, and not merely from places like Glasgow or Greenock or Paisley or Dundee, but from towns and villages in Scotland, the names of which were almost unknown to me.

Believe me, my dear Lord Justice Clerk,

Most truly yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

To

The Rt. Hon. John Hope,
Lord Justice Clerk.

CHAPTER XI

THE CLOSING SCENE

HIS fall from office was felt by Sir Robert as "the greatest relief from an intolerable burden." Home he went. "Lady Peel and I," he writes in July 1846, "are here quite alone in the loveliest weather feasting on solitude and repose, and I have every reason to forgive my enemies for having conferred upon me the blessing of the loss of power."

During the years that followed, his main purpose in life was to guard over the safety and the execution of those measures and of that policy with which his name is associated. This resolution found its most ample and authoritative expression in his speech of July 6, 1849. And some weeks before his death in the following year he wrote that "if others entertain doubts as to the wisdom of the commercial policy adopted from 1841 to 1847, I entertain none, and shall do everything in my power to prevent the reversal of that policy, or the restoration of Protection, in any shape or on any pretence whatever." [1]

So far as his contemporaries were concerned, they learned something of his meaning when they witnessed the reality of that devastating Irish famine of which he had seen the approach and which he had laboured to avert. Still more, they saw in 1848 that,

[1] Letter of May 16, 1850. Parker, vol. iii, p. 534.

while every throne in Europe was shaken or shattered, our Constitution alone stood firm against the revolutionary shock. It is said that when the news of the flight of Louis Philippe from the throne of France reached the House of Commons, Hume crossed the floor to carry the information to Sir Robert Peel. The fallen Minister pointed to the benches behind him. "This is what would have happened here," he said, "if I had listened to *them*."

As regards our own generation, it was not until 1914 and the coming of Armageddon that we realised the strength and the necessity of that commercial and economic system which had been his handiwork.

A distinguished Frenchman of that age, the Comte de Jarnac, the representative in those days of the Government of Louis Philippe at our Court, has furnished a picture of Sir Robert, when he first saw him in 1838, and next on the occasion of an intimate talk with him in the year 1847.

Of the earlier date he writes:

I felt considerable emotion when I found myself alone and face to face with so eminent a man. In a vast library crowded with Parliamentary documents he was seated at those labours which absorbed his life. Through the long windows of Whitehall Gardens one could see, so far as the thick and yellow mists of the old city would allow it, the vast surface of the Thames crowded with numberless vessels, the emblems of the riches, the power, and the indefatigable energies of a mighty nation. Sir Robert Peel was then in the flower of his age. His impressive and noble figure, his thick hair of an auburn hue, his blonde complexion, all this indicated a constitution well calculated to endure the fatigues and trials of public life.

The Comte then refers to an intimate talk with Sir Robert in the year 1847:

I shall preserve [he writes] an unforgettable recollection of a dinner at his house about the middle of 1847. The repast over, and the ladies having retired according to an ancient custom still observed in England, I found myself seated next to my host. Our conversation bore at once on the general situation in Europe and upon the internal condition of France, upon which the ex-Premier entertained an anxiety which was only too prophetic. He spoke to me first of the socialist writings of Louis Blanc, which he had studied very closely, and asked me as to the extent of their influence in France. I expressed the hope that such appeals to revolt against the inevitable conditions of civilised society would never find many dupes or victims among a population so intelligent as our own.

Sir Robert listened to me with close attention, in that thoughtful attitude which was his wont, his head a little bowed, his cheek resting on his hand, slightly inclining his head when my words accorded with his own feelings, and shaking it sadly when he could not share in my optimism.

At length he looked up and began to speak. Such writings, he argued, must not be judged by the effect which they may produce upon the fortunate ones of this world, upon those classes whose education or enlightenment can preserve them in comfort. But our civilisation has had the result of dooming numberless millions of human beings to an existence of perpetual labour, to profound ignorance, and to sufferings as difficult to remedy as they are undeserved. What ferments will not be produced in these cramped intelligences, in these embittered hearts, by such passionate invitations to their hopes, to their desires, and to their revenge?

The soil of our ancient Europe is deeply undermined [he said]. Is England herself unassailable? Who shall measure the heartburnings, the resentments, the daring projects which ferment under the glowing surface of our modern civilisation? Who shall dare to foretell the day of explosion, the spark which shall fire the train? Who shall calculate the boundless ruins of the cataclysm which shall cumber the surface of our Western world?

Up till that moment [continues the Comte], I had thought little of such issues and had uniformly ignored such anxious meditations as these. Until then, the history of the past, the spectacle of the outward life of nations, the diverse monuments of their ancient grandeur, their mutual relationships in the past and in the future, all this had been the centre and the subject of my thoughts.

But, as the great statesman before me held on his way, those walls around me, all blazing with light, and teeming with the masterpieces of Rubens and Reynolds, seemed to crumble and vanish in a moment before my gaze. And from the dark and dismal abyss which lay beyond them, I saw, conjured up before me, the disinherited among men, the outcast masses of humanity, who exist but to suffer and to labour and to curse their fate, and under the weight of whose just and wrathful indignation the most august and venerable empires of Christendom shall perish in a day.

Then was it for the first time that I understood, indeed, why it was that the statesman before me had relented not, until he had abolished the Corn Laws for ever; and I learnt the true character of the genius of Sir Robert Peel.

But these years of relative leisure, of an easier public life, of inward meditation, of domestic happiness, of pride in a family which was already growing

up to distinction, flew swiftly on to June 29, 1850, the day of that riding accident which was to terminate his life.

Shortly after his death on July 2, we may read in the diary of Frances, Lady Shelley, an account of what immediately preceded the event. It may be explained that, on the night of June 28, there was a debate in the House of Commons, lasting long into the early morning of the next day, on the subject of the foreign policy of Lord Palmerston, well known in our history as the Don Pacifico debate.

The Duchess of Gloucester [writes Lady Shelley] has given me an interesting account of a visit which she paid to Lady Peel a few days ago. She found her more composed, though shedding floods of tears. She told the Duchess that on the night of the Debate —when Sir Robert made his last speech—she felt very unwell, but was determined not to go to bed until her husband came home, at 3 o'clock in the morning. Sir Robert complained of great fatigue and exhaustion, so she entreated him to go to bed. She saw him wind up his watch, as usual, but he remained so long in his dressing-room that she became alarmed, and went in. She found him on his knees saying his prayers, which he never failed to do before going to bed, however late it might be.

The next morning, Lady Peel was so tired and unwell, that he begged her not to get up to make his breakfast, which she usually did. Sir Robert expressed himself satisfied with the speech he had made. She read it in bed, and was so pleased with it that she wrote him a little note, to tell him how delighted she had been, as she did not expect to see him till dinner-time. Peel wrote an answer to say that he never was so happy as when his dear Julia approved of what he did.

Lady Peel passed that morning as usual, and was crossing the hall when, to her surprise, she saw Sir Robert, who had not yet gone out. Lady Peel said, "Oh! pray make haste and take your ride. We dine at the Jerseys' and must not be late." Peel said he would be back in time; and, as she passed on, he called her back, and said: "Julia, you are not going without wishing me 'good-bye,' or saying those sweet words: 'God bless you.'" They embraced; and he mounted his horse. Alas! to be brought home after that dreadful accident!

Lady Peel said it was her greatest comfort to talk of him, and thereby to recall the minutest circumstances of their happy married life. She said, what we all know, that every other feeling was swallowed up in her devotion to him, a devotion that was so tenderly returned.[1]

One who has happily been spared to us, the "beautiful daughter" of the letter of May 12, 1842, the present Lady Julia Wombwell, told me a little incident the other day. The close of June, 1850, was hot, and she and her sister were going down to the seaside. In passing through London for that purpose they came to call on their grandmother, Lady Peel, at Whitehall Gardens.

When the visit was nearly ended and it was time for the children to go, Lady Peel suddenly exclaimed, "Oh! but they must see Sir Robert! He would never allow them to go without seeing them." But the message came back that Sir Robert had given express orders that he was not to be disturbed in any case. He was, in fact, preparing his last speech in the House of Commons for that night, that "Speech of Peace" as he himself called it, or, as John Bright

[1] *Diary of Lady Shelley*, p. 291.

was to describe it hereafter, "that last, that beautiful, that most solemn speech," enjoining, as against the methods of our old diplomacy, the nobler and better way of peace on earth and goodwill among the nations.

So they could not see him! A great disappointment for the little party! It was time to go!

Just at that moment the doors of the library suddenly opened, and in the doorway was to be seen the tall, commanding figure of Sir Robert Peel himself. His look was grave, weighted down, as it were, by the forty years of statesmanship wherein he had served—and saved—the Commonwealth. But when he saw the children, his countenance brightened with a smile of pleasure—that radiant look, which, long ago in the flower of his manhood, the brush of Lawrence had caught so well.

And he bent down and kissed them, and bade them stay with him for a little. For his work was done.

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